CHESTERTON
And Other Essays

WILLIAM T. SCOTT

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CHESTERTON AND OTHER ESSAYS

By

Rev. William T. Scott

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PREFACE

IT is always a difficult thing for a writer to write up to his predestination. The author of these essays had a plan in mind when he sought to link together literary temperaments as dissimilar as those which are discussed in this volume—and that plan was to trace the moral and religious teachings of the various writers. But he had not proceeded far before he discovered that homiletically things were going wrong, and he preferred to go on, though his rambling spirit took him far afield, rather than to keep strictly to his sermonic theme. As he first intended, he has not omitted to discuss these values, but he has done so only in an incidental way, and his justification for the book is not made on the ground that it brings a message to the moral and the religious life, but on the ground of his love for wandering in literary fields. W. T. S.

Denver, Colo., June 14, 1912.

Chesterton as Writer and Critic

SOME one who had in mind the great versatility of Gilbert Chesterton called him an institution. The literary world has acquired the habit of going to him for everything, and it is expected that instantly an opinion will be forthcoming. He has himself declared that he writes books because men dare him, and the inference is that the only way to keep down the flood of his output is to ignore his works. He writes poetry, biography, essays, stories, long and short; philosophy, and theology. He has opinions on art, science, politics which he vents in voluminous forms. Although a young man, he has already become the subject for antiquarian research. No one is supposed to know at once what are the titles of his books. If it were not evident from the impetuosity of his style, and other large ear-marks, which no person could sanely lay to any other mind than that of Mr. Chesterton, it would not be difficult to presume, as some have done, that he is the head of a syndicate of able writers, whose business is to keep the reading public well supplied with titillating bonbons or erratic sky-rockets, warranted to go off in the most unexpected and provocative manner. But Mr. Chesterton has at last become a necessity. Whether we are able to place him among the serious writers or not, we feel that he is not to be ignored. He brings such a blare of trumpets and such orchestral crashings that we must perforce hear or vacate the premises. The kingdom of greater things may come without observation, but his kingdom is ushered in with the hautboys and the resounding tom-toms. And this method of attracting attention is according to his liking. He likes the parade. He has praised the Salvation Army for the noise it makes. This is the one admirable feature of the entire movement to him. He holds that the Comtist philosophy has but one admirable feature, and that is the one which Mr. Frederick Harrison, who, perhaps, is the only notable adherent of the philosophy to-day, finds fault with—its ritualistic system. Mr. Chesterton looks upon literature as a boy looks upon his toys—something to make noise with. He believes that the child life is the normal life and the child loves are the normal loves. Grimm and Hans Andersen, Edward Lear and Carroll, are the household penates. When he became a man he put away childish things, but not child things. He thinks that the health of the physical and the mental world is to be found in the first estate of childhood. He is a romancer of the most pronounced type. Like Maurice Hewlett, when he goes into the woods he goes prepared to see nymphs dancing their whistling ringlets in the wind. Nothing that may be imagined needs be unexpected. And yet his love is not primarily for the woods, but for the cities. There is more poetry for him in the streets of London with its crashing omnibuses, its straggling humanity, winding in all poetic directions—to the clubs, the slums, the marts, the playgrounds, the homes, the dens—than in all the vast parade and extravagance of the moods of nature. He goes through the streets of London in the beginning of the twentieth century with the same spirit of adventure that led the mediæval knights to storm a castle for some fair lady's sake. The science of the day which has been busy depopulating the world of its sprites and fairies he will have none of. A science that does not make life full, that sings no song, that paints no picture, that adds no swiftness to the feet, is a science that is of the earth earthy and not worth a man's serious thinking. He has found fun with the optimist, and yet he is the most pronounced optimist of the day. He likes Browning, we take it, better than he likes Tennyson, because Browning assumed things which Tennyson fought for. To assume the ideal, and then fight for your assumption, is for him one of the high joys of living.

But while the message of the writer is the most important contribution he can make to his generation, the form of his message is the surest index to its longevity. That elusive quality which we call style is after all the most permanent thing of a writer. But the strange thing about style is that it will not admit of standards. We seek to measure the style of one man by the style of another man and the work turns out to be supererogatory. We may have a standard for vitality, constructiveness, incident, and other literary devices, but style is the nebulous, formless thing that encompasses and interpenetrates the book as an atmosphere. It is something that a man can not be self-conscious of. When a writer thinks about his style, he has no style worth mentioning. The usual conception is that style is something like peacock plumes or cunning gewgaws hung out in the conspicuous places of a man's speech. But no man prepares his message and then goes over it a second time with a shaker filled with rhetorical devices, that he may salt and pepper it for the delectation of the crowd. Style in literature differs from the Parisian styles which deal in woman's dress and headwear. A woman has style in dress as she puts on things; a man has style in literature as he takes off things. A man's style in literature is the nakedness of his soul. We speak of an ornate style like Tennyson's, or a pure style like Milton's, and the assumption is that Tennyson has been running to all the literary milliners to get the latest fashions, and there are some who for that reason have called him "Miss Alfred," while Milton has gotten into the dance of the Dervishes, and with his fast whirling pace has thrown his cumbering garments to the wind, until he seems nothing more than a spectral wraith, kissed by the lucid air of the day. But the chief business of both Tennyson and Milton has been that of taking off things. No man ever cut more into the quick of his thought and sent the excrescent things to the discard than has Tennyson. He was one of the greatest critics in literature, but all his criticism has been devoted to his own works. Tennyson shows a great naked soul as well as does Milton, and the difference between these two giants is the difference between their loves and gifts, not the difference between the ornamentation of one and the nakedness of the other. For this reason it is unwise to ask a man to be careful about his style. His thought may need mending, his spirit may need medicine, his knowledge may suffer from turgidity, but his style is the nakedness of the soul, showing its defects and glories, its insights ,and oversights; and we must not ask that it be mended. It therefore comes to pass that when we talk about the style of a man we are in reality talking about the soul of a man. We are using a metaphor. The business, then, of literary criticism is not that of simply dealing with cunning expressions, but its chief business is psychological—dealing with the soul and with its loves. A man will live because his soul is big enough to live, and not because he is able to put together a string of words that ring like chimes. When we ask, therefore, for the style of Mr. Chesterton, we ask primarily for the man and his characteristics. The one thing which stands out with the greatest prominence in the writings of Mr. Chesterton is that of his pugnacity. Mr. Chesterton is a born fighter. He is first and foremost a propagandist. Nothing seems to delight him more than to find an adversary who will face him toe to toe. He is always inviting the contest, and the pugnacious English writers are always accepting the defi. The result is that a merry war is always going on in the little tight island which is throwing its echoes around the English-speaking world. Mr. Chesterton likes Bernard Shaw. He considers him as a man with a system of thought and always consistent in his expression. "Perhaps the last of the Puritans," he calls him. But what profound joy does Mr. Chesterton show in showing off the superman of Mr. Shaw! The superman of Well also comes in for a good drubbing. Mr. Chesterton has attacked Kipling for his lack of patriotism; Tolstoi, for the meagerness of his simple life; Ibsen, for his strange inconsistencies in the portrayal of character; George Moore, for his perpetual posing. He has thrown down the gauntlet and picked up the gauntlet a number of times in the interests of religion. He has gone after the higher critic whose honest intentions have led him into the regions of "the twilight of the gods" rather than into the sunlight of the Creator. So pronounced is this spirit of dissent in Mr. Chesterton that he seems to like argument for its own dear sake. Like an experienced wrestler, he sometimes leaves himself open for an obvious trip, and when the novice makes a dash for the opening he soon finds his shoulders on the mat. Mr. Chesterton is perhaps the most subtle of all the present controversialists of the English-speaking race. We do not mean that he is the most nearly correct. He leaves a score of doors open for the disputant to come in and tread on his toes. But it is only his toes that are kept on exhibition to invite trespass. Woe to the man who thinks that he has an easy victory because he sees an easy opening. Mr. Chesterton is a man of such vast resources, with such a comprehensive and penetrative imagination that there is always trouble ahead for any one who impulsively engages him in argument.

It is in this disputative element of Mr. Chesterton that we may find a reason for his paradoxical method of statement. The reputation of Mr. Chesterton has suffered unduly from his use of the paradox. It has been affirmed that he uses the form of paradox from sheer affectation. That he uses it simply to startle, and not because it is a true statement of a fact. But this is evidently a mistaken judgment. Mr. Chesterton has persistently declared that his statements must be taken as expressing his complete convictions, and a survey of his many books will go far to corroborate his statement. It would not be an overstatement to say that Mr. Chesterton is strongly consistent. In his books we may trace various changes of thought, but they are changes which he has himself pointed out, and are chiefly upon minor matters. He does not say a thing because he believes it to be catchy and paradoxical, but because he believes it to be profoundly true. Perhaps one of the reasons why he likes Bernard Shaw is because Mr. Shaw has been strongly attacked for his use of the paradox. We can trace through all the apologies which Mr. Chesterton has made for his friend an apology for his own writing. He said of Mr. Shaw: "I know perfectly well what Mr. Bernard Shaw will be saying thirty years hence; he will be saying what he has always said. If thirty years hence I meet Mr. Shaw, a reverend being with a silver beard sweeping the earth, and say to him, 'One can never, of course, make a verbal attack upon a lady,' the patriarch will lift his aged hand and fell me to the earth. We know, I say, what Mr. Shaw will be saying thirty years hence." And we feel quite certain of some things that Mr. Chesterton will be saying thirty years hence, if he keeps his place on the planet. He will tell us that Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll and Grimm and Hans Andersen have written the final philosophy of life. He will smite any man to the earth who will talk about "art for art's sake." He will defend "penny dreadfuls" and rash vows. He will stand for a defense of nonsense. He will poke fun at science, and keep philosophy well poised on the hip, ready to give it a throw. And now, as we think about it, we note that for over ten years he has been advocating these very things. His first notable volume of essays, "The Defendant," contains an exposition of all these topics, and his latest volumes still continue to reiterate his former expressions. There is a vast deal of conservatism in Mr. Chesterton. He has a stability of thought which has not been generally recognized. His paradoxical language, his verbal gymnastics, his spirit of banter, of give and take, his fierce joy for battle—all these have thrown an aura about him that the quick-breathing critic has interpreted as being the essence of insincerity. But it is not wise to dismiss Mr.

Chesterton as simply a funmaker, a weaver of dreams of nonsense. He not only has immense subtleness, but is a profound thinker who has gone to the root of many matters, and made some of the most notable statements of any of the thinkers of the day. For instance, in the realm of theology he has shown what contribution a man of imagination may make to the conservative and so-called "orthodox" view. After this book has been read, one can not but wish that a few more apologetic works on Christianity might be written by men with the poetic instinct, for it seems that the poet gets nearer to the heart of the Christian religion than any other man. In the great book, "What is Wrong with the World," Mr. Chesterton has given some of the most profound suggestions of the day for the reforms of the world. While there are many things in this book which have been hastily written, still there is such a large constructive ability shown in the outline of the book as to convince us that Mr. Chesterton has the viewpoint of the philosopher. "The Ball and the Cross" is a didactic story with many interesting situations, but the philosophy of life is so profound that the book may be called a good allegory. There is hardly one of the great number of essays he has written but that contains some startling suggestion which opens up new trains of thought to the reader.

Reference has been made to the disputative element in the writings of Mr. Chesterton. An interesting essay might be written on the subject, "Art and Pugnacity." Mr. Chesterton would be the man to write the essay. There is, of course, some discussion as to whether both of these characteristics may be combined. In some quarters the conviction is expressed that the gladiator and the artist must be two persons. The true artist does not fight, has no propaganda, or if one, of such a delicate mauve color that it does not flare its impertinence before the eye, like the flaming scarlet or the glaring green. We are told that the artist is the man who has no imposing convictions, but who keeps himself receptive to the splendors of the natural world and the subtle currents that move through our human race. Charles Lamb is a good patron saint of this school. Walter Pater is perhaps a better one, while Henry James is the principal and faculty of the college that has developed this theory to its ultimate degree. The theory is that art is sinuous and not direct, that a club or a meat axe never gets results worthy the name of art.

The rapier is the only weapon of offense and defense, and even the rapier should be laid aside, save under the most gruelling circumstances. It is one of the peculiarities of criticism that Charles Lamb has to get on all sides of literary disputes. When any one begins to talk about literary art, for the sake of precipitating a contest, there is a sort of an universal scramble to get Lamb chosen first. Of course no one of the Pater school or of the Henry James school considers Lamb any more than a buffer to keep the sharp winds of criticism off his favorite; but for that purpose, if no other, Lamb does well. And then Lamb has that mediating position, which, because of the universal esteem in which he is held, makes him a good missionary for any literary cause. But Mr. Chesterton with his far-flung battle line is *non grata* with this school. He carries altogether too burly a figure to match the environment. His weapons are so ponderous that a small handful of them overcrowd their arsenal and make the wall to bulge; and his shout is so persistently uproarious that he invades their lotus isle like some cyclopean adventurer from another planet. Therefore the only way to treat Mr. Chesterton is to issue a writ of ejectment and cast him forth from the invaded provinces of art as an intruder. But it must be noted that something may be said on the side of the pugnacious or didactic art, and Mr. Chesterton has had a word upon the subject himself. He said: "Suppose that any cool and cynical art-critic fully impressed that artists were greatest when they were most purely artistic, suppose a man who professed ably a humane æstheticism, as did Mr. Max Beerbohm, or a cruel æstheticism, as did Mr. W. E. Henley, had cast his eye over the whole fictional literature which was recent in the year 1895, and had been asked to select the three most vigorous and promising and original artist and artistic works, he would, I think, most certainly have said that for a fine artistic audacity, for a real artistic delicacy, or for a whiff of true novelty in art, the things that stood first were 'Soldiers Three,' by Mr. Rudyard Kipling; 'Arms and the Man,' by Mr. Bernard Shaw; and 'The Time Machine,' by a man named Wells. And all these men have shown themselves ingrainedly didactic. You may express the matter, if you will, by saying that if we want doctrines we go to the great artists. But it is clear from the psychology of the matter that this is not the true statement; the true statement is that when we want any art tolerably brisk and bold we have to go to the doctrinaires."

And this seems to be correct. If we want a tolerably brisk art we must go to the doctrinaires. Life is a greater term in literature than art, and life can not be strongly portrayed by one who only feebly possesses it. Neither may we expect a brisk and lively art from one who has no deep-seated convictions. Art is but the shadow which follows a man, and if a man's life is hazy and his convictions bedimmed, then his art will be but the shadow of a shadow. Some may grow enthusiastic over the delicateness of such a product, as men have grown enthusiastic over the autumnal haze that gathers about the later writings of Henry James. But a life that has been refined until it has lost its deep convictions will not speak with any air sufficiently brisk to keep a good tenure on the likings of men. Wheat bread will be a good food for men many generations from now, when the filmy cakes and the etherealized sweetmeats will be left in the confectioner's show window by a good, deep-chested, heavy-breathing, well-stomached race. The world needs to get on, and art must help to carry the musket and the haversack. And it will be no less a gracious art because it does battle and puts food before the warrior. Gilbert Chesterton has a brisk, bold art. How long he may march prospering will depend upon the swing of his cutlass and the force of his battle cry. His figure now has much of militancy, and his pace argues a good day's march.

When we turn to Mr. Chesterton as a literary critic, we are at the parting of the ways with many true lovers of literature. The critic has perhaps the most thankless task of all the workers in the literary field. This public disregard arises from the growing conviction that the critic can have no message because he can have no set standards of merit, and the assumption is that all criticism is purely subjective and therefore must be chameleon in its aspects. But even if this be true, there should always be some interest in learning what one soul may think of the great souls of the world. We are interested when we find that Byron did not like Shakespeare, that Goethe thought that Ossian should be kept in close fellowship with Homer, that Ruskin and Chesterton could go into a mild ecstacy over Pope. The man who has picked up but a smattering of literary lore will smile at these estimates to-day. But just such estimates have brought about a skeptical attitude toward the entire work of literary criticism. The appetite for literature is considered as diverse as the appetite for food. One man thinks that he could live on meat, another on cake, and still another on pickles. Each holds that there is to be no arguing against taste. But the fact is too frequently overlooked that there is always a valid argument for the best food. A little study of physiology, a little study of food values, and a fairly good diet may be prepared for the ordinary man. If a man is not quite the ordinary man, then he is not counted, but set aside for private examination by the diagnostician. The principles of any science are always deduced from the mass of things and not from the single and *outre* fact. We believe that there are some valid principles of criticism, even though Saintsbury comes with his three massive volumes to disprove the statement. It seems that there is a very simple method of determining whether there are any principles with which to judge literature, and that is by determining whether there is any literature which has proved to be permanent. Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare, at least, have gotten their names pretty well accredited. Now if there are no static principles, and everything gets judged through temperament, and every temperament is made out of original clay with no fellow, then it is folly to talk about permanency in literature. A stream of sensations does not make for permanency. Where an eddy is found there is some substance hid under the swirling waters, and where in literature a man's work has been washed out of the current, and for centuries has drawn sightseers and lovers, the only inference is that some vertebræ has held together this mass of flesh and blood. Of course, the great contention is how to trace this vertebræ. That some have found a digit, and with great eclat have proclaimed the find of an ulna or a humerus, is a truth which has brought the whole scheme of scientific literary criticism into a contretemps. But we may suppose that some man will arise who can so carefully compute the personal equations which enter into the judgment of literature, that we can trace a law in even the so-called exceptions. We shall await the coming of this man with patience, and in the meantime will hold to the ideal of a possible scheme of literary criticism which may have a scientific aspect.

Gilbert Chesterton does not come with any system or scales with which to weigh literary values. There is a pronounced sense in which he is no literary critic at all; and yet he has given us at least five books which deal with literary men and literature. For instance, he never takes the time to show the felicities of language of his favorite authors. Swinburne is always doing this. Poe thinks a great deal of structure and of form. Coleridge's explanatory finger is down on everything. Most of the critics of the early days of the past century were technical in their criticism. They knew the definite thing that was good. They did not seek to hide their ignorance under sweeping generalizations. Hazlitt has a name which has grown brighter since the first great cloud of neglect has been removed, and now he is one of the brightest luminaries in the sky of criticism. But Mr. Chesterton never seems intent on showing off the fine feathers of his friends. That he can appreciate them, no one should seriously doubt. He is himself amazingly eloquent at times. An anthology could be gleaned from his writing which would set hearts to beating quickly and feet to be shuffling for the dance. But he does not seek to explain the details of craftsmanship. Coleridge gave an immense impetus to the study of Shakespeare because he was definite in pointing out the verbal beauties. Swinburne advanced the reputation of his friend Dante Rossetti by his illuminating criticism of the individual poems. But Mr. Chesterton is more in the class with Matthew Arnold and that too much neglected genius, Bagehot. He likes the philosophy of things more than the technique of things. He scents for the track of the main idea, and then is off on the chase like a bloodhound. Posy-picking is too small a task for a man with the warrior's blood. He himself may put on rich garments, but he does so only because it is a natural thing to do, and not because he takes any pride in being above his fellows in his garnishings. In an interesting essay on Pope in "Varied Types," he shows the modern dilettantism in poetry which arises by an author dwelling altogether on form.

"Supposing that a lyric poet of the new school really had to deal with such an idea as that expressed in Pope's line about Man:

'A being darkly wise and rudely great!'

Is it really so certain that he would go deeper into the matter than that old antithetical jingle goes? I venture to doubt whether he would really be any wiser or weirder or more imaginative or more profound. The one thing he would really be, would be longer. Instead of writing

'A being darkly wise and rudely great,'

the contemporary poet, in his elaborately ornamental book of verses, would produce something like the following:

'A creature
Of feature
More dark, more dark, more dark than skies,
Yea, darkly wise, yea, darkly wise:
Darkly wise as a formless fate.
And if he be great,
If he be great, then rudely great,
Rudely great as a plough that plies,
And darkly wise, and darkly wise.'

"Have we really learned to think more broadly? Or have we only learned to spread our thoughts thinner? I have a dark suspicion that a modern poet might manufacture an admirable lyric out of almost every line of Pope."

It is then because of this fiercely didactic element in Mr. Chesterton that we rarely ever find him seeking to explain the delicate beauties of any of the authors he treats. In his book, "Heretics," he writes of Ibsen, Shaw, Kipling, Wells, Moore, and other literary men, but his whole bent is ethical, not æsthetical. He attempts to show that each of these authors shows some moral delinquency which must result in evil to society. In "Varied Types" he is upon the same quest. His book on Bernard Shaw is not a literary estimate nor a biography, but a great sermon with Shaw used as a shuttlecock to be tossed back and forth as the player may choose. He is but a prolonged illustration to carry Mr. Chesterton's views of life. In Robert Browning, and more particularly in Charles Dickens, we have found some of his most sympathetic criticism. His Browning is not so interesting as some of his other books, but the work has been sanely done, and will rank perhaps a little above the ordinary biography. But Mr. Chesterton greatly loved Charles Dickens, and some of his finest estimates are here given. We can not expect of Mr. Chesterton that he will go into the details of Dickens as Mr. Forster has so excellently done in his life of Dickens. The books should be complementary to each other. In the estimate of Mr. Chesterton, however, will be found some of the most original utterances which have been made upon the great British novelist.

Mr. Chesterton as a critic must always be judged from the standpoint of the romancer.

All his early training and reading tended to produce this bias. He fed on Scott, Dumas, and Stevenson, and these prepared him for his greater love, Charles Dickens. In poetry, Whitman and Browning gave assistance, and in essay he was devoted to Macaulay. When, therefore, he came to the work of writing criticism or of producing literature, he saw everything through the eyes of the romancer. Life was made up of thrills. It was a capital sin to talk about the humdrum of life. A man was born every day to meet surprises. They were to beset him in his business. In the routine of life he was to catch visions. Nature was to bring joy to him in many forms. The sunshine was a glorious birth. The falling of moonlight on woods and pastures and city streets was like silent music. Mr. Chesterton bending to literature was like a boy in the hey-dey of tops and marbles and swimming pools and first loves and war-like novels. Every day was full of adventure. Life was one great maze of bewilderment and joy, and the future was a land still unexplored, but waiting the running of eager feet and the glad surprise of inquisitorial eyes.

One difference between the romancer and the realist is the difference represented by the old debate between pursuit and possession. One is straining his ear to hear the music which is blown from some inconspicuous greenwood, with the hope that when the notes rise with the wind in larger volume they will bring some increasing ecstacy; while the realist, in utter composure of spirit, sits down to analyze the causes which make music such a delightful refreshment. No one should call in question that the larger knowledge of psychology is required by the realist for his task. But it is quite obvious that there is something of a task in his exploit. The lure of the romancer is to the fields of joy—some paths where in a vagrant mood he may wander close to Elysian bowers, while the lure of the realist is to the fields of knowledge where he may discern things in their mental relations. The relative merits of the realist's art and the romancer's art is one of the old battlefields of literature. One general observation may be made—youth likes the exploit while age likes the reason. William Dean Howells and Henry James will find their readers not among the young, but among the practical men who have been disillusioned by a thousand things, and who can find in these writers a fine sense of verisimilitude. But youth will spend its days with the romancers. The romances may be "pot boilers," but the romp of life, the tumult of adventure, the lure of strange lands are enough for the boy, and he does not hold up a judicial finger to decide whether the story needs be immortal. The fine reason for things is likely to come when one has lost the joy for things; and this may in a general way account for the fact that the critic and the producer of good literature are not frequently united in one.

But Mr. Chesterton is a critic and a romantic artist. His stories are occult tales. The Father Brown series and "The Club of Queer Trades" are puzzles that keep one on the *qui vive* until the last paragraph has been read. Conan Doyle does not carry more the sense of mystery in his Sherlock Holmes stories. If one is inclined to become analytical, he may resort to the old criticism that "the characters are not flesh and blood." But any one who will read the tales will not take the time to make this remark *in cursum*. The remark in itself is used generally in the interests of realism. "Flesh and blood" can be connected only with the introspective art. A man's motives must be microscopically and chemically tested before the characters can be determined as real. The chief difficulty about this theory is that it is not true. We can get at the truth of character through adventure or the outside world as well as through the analytical method. Robinson Crusoe is just as real as Bartley Hubbard in "A Modern Instance." The man who chops wood, or sails a ship, or fights a battle, is just as real as the man who gets before a camera and has an introspective photographer send some X-rays into his interior for the purpose of showing up the inner life. And there is this quite crowning distinction between Robinson Crusoe and Bartley Hubbard —Howells made Hubbard and Crusoe made himself. DeFoe is a negligible factor when you read the book. We do not mean that a work of realism is a self-conscious work. It would not be realistic if this were true. Tolstoi's art is fiercely external as well as internal. Mr. Howells is a true artist. But life to seem real must not be played with or fondled too assiduously. It must swing out into such wide circuits that we lose all sense of the operator working the factotums. The realist is so likely to keep himself in a small compass that unless he shows a wonderful deftness of hand we shall see the strings moving the mechanism. The great man may write either as a realist or a romancer, and the work in either field will be satisfactory, but the failure will be more apparent in the field of realism than in that of romance. In the case of Mr. Chesterton we are more interested in the story than in the characters. "Napoleon of Notting Hill" has many interesting scenes, particularly the last great battle; but we are not so much interested in any of the characters. But Father Brown is distinct enough and original enough. Had he a foil like Watson in the Sherlock Holmes series, he might rival successfully the great creation of Doyle. But as it is, the character has much of romantic interest. The priest as detective makes a startling personality, with sufficient play between the two occupations to keep one in a suggestive suspense. His book, "The Club of Queer Trades" is *sui generis.* The entire conception is so entirely outside of the conventional that we may place this series of short stories as among his best. There is an abundance of humor shown, and the element of mystery is never removed until the close. Such a book will bring out one of the characteristics of all the stories of Mr. Chesterton. He selects the most improbable plot, and then, as in the case of Poe, he writes with almost a mathematical precision to show that the incidents move in a natural order. He has much of the instinct of Hawthorne for the *outre* conception which may be worked into a cosmos. This selection of topics will always lay Mr. Chesterton open to the charge of insincerity, while his paradoxical method of presentation will only augment this suspicion. To many people Mr. Chesterton makes the appeal of being nothing more than a verbal gymnast. They are willing to acknowledge his greatness as a tumbler or a contortionist, but their contention is, as in the case of Mr. McCabe—quoted elsewhere—that the need of the world is for serious-minded men and not men who continue to exude sophisms. We hold no brief for the sincerity of Mr. Chesterton, but we believe that the attack has not been made in a vulnerable spot. His Achilles' heel is not his insincerity, although many instances of inconsistency may be shown to prop the contention. It may turn out that many of the things which have brought upon him the charge of insincerity may prove to be some of the very things which will preserve for him a long green memory. We are more inclined to believe that when he takes his rightful place among the authors of England that the things which will conspire to lift him will be his vigor of thought, originality of expression, discursive imagination, and complete common sense. He will suffer because of a certain perversity of utterance, a combativeness that too jauntily takes notice of the foe, a cocksureness that is always parading its *ipse dixit*, and a carelessness that leaves ends of the argument unmatched.

Chesterton as a Religious Writer

THEOLOGY has always been looked upon as a grave study. It so deals with the fundamentals of life, character, and destiny that its treatment of the great questions involved must be with the utmost sobriety. It was in this spirit that the older theologians prepared their monumental works, and it may hardly be presumed that those who have been brought up to admire the conventional standards of the theologian will do anything less than frown upon the advent of Chesterton as a religious writer. Mr. Chesterton carries too much the bonhomie of the world, his laughter is too Gargantuan, he disposes his sentences in too acrobatic attitudes to please the staid admirer of the time-honored method of stating religious themes. And then he has one quality which is oppressive to the systematic thinker, and that is his cocksureness. Not that the theologian is not cocksure. All of the old type were that, but their absolute conviction was based upon the result of severely logical processes. Their objections to Mr. Chesterton is that he shouts his convictions from the house tops, waves his hands in adieu to the bewildered spectators, then disappears through the back way with some echo of laughter blown down the wind. This is not considered a genteel way of presenting theology. One should be led along the subterranean ways until he becomes acquainted with the dark passages and knows his footing; but this putting on wings and swooping down on sacred thoughts like a hawk darting for his prey is too ungracious and unsolemn a proceeding to get good praise from the theological sanctum.

Another objection which may be made against Mr. Chesterton is that he is too young and too old. He is like a David going out against a Goliath, and the question is a debatable one whether he carries any pebble for his sling. He has boisterous confidence, but how about his muscle? He seems too aged in his opinions to suit many of the moderns. He is extremely conservative. The higher critic who thinks that there are some things which he has irrefutably settled and who believes that it is folly to go over the ground which has been burnt to ashes through the fires of the higher criticism, feels that Mr. Chesterton carries too many gray hairs to be a boon companion to the merry, up-to-date scholars of the day. But it seems useless to get Mr. Chesterton to abandon either his method of expression or to leave his conservative ground. Mr. McCabe, an English free-thinker, made an urgent appeal for Mr. Chesterton to be more decorous in his presentation of religious truth.

"He (Chesterton) admits that we are waging a thankless war for what we take to be truth and progress. He is doing the same. But why, in the name of all that is reasonable, should we, when we are agreed on the momentousness of the issue either way, forthwith desert serious methods of conducting the controversy? Why, when the vital need of our time is to induce men and women to collect their thoughts occasionally, and be men and women—nay, to remember that they are really gods who hold the destinies of humanity on their knees—why should we think that this kaleidoscope play of phrases is inopportune? The ballets of the Alhambra, and the fireworks of the Crystal Palace, and Mr. Chesterton's *Daily News* articles have their place in life. But how a serious social student can think of curing the thoughtlessness of our generation by strained paradoxes; by giving people a sane grasp of social problems by literary sleight-of-hand; of settling important questions by a reckless shower of rocket-metaphors and inaccurate "facts," and the substitution of imagination for judgment, I can not see."

In reply to this criticism Mr. Chesterton wrote:

"Mr. McCabe thinks that I am not serious but only funny, because Mr. McCabe thinks that funny is the opposite of serious. Funny is the opposite of not funny and nothing else. The question of whether a man expresses himself in a grotesque or laughable phraseology, or in a stately or refrained phraseology, is not a question of motive or of moral state, it is a question of instinctive language and self-expression. Whether a man chooses to tell the truth in long sentences or short jokes is a problem analagous to whether he chooses to tell the truth in French or German. . . . The two qualities of fun and seriousness have nothing whatever to do with each other, and are no more comparable than black and triangular. Mr. Bernard Shaw is funny and sincere; Mr. George Robey is funny and not sincere. Mr. McCabe is sincere and not funny. The average Cabinet Minister is not sincere and not funny. . . . Why should Mr. McCabe be so eloquent about the danger arising from fantastic and paradoxical writers? Why should he be so ardent in desiring grave and verbose writers? There are not so many fantastic and paradoxical writers. But there are a gigantic number of grave and verbose writers; and it is by the efforts of the grave and verbose writers that everything that Mr. McCabe detests (and everything that I detest, for that matter) is kept in existence and energy. How can it have come about that a man as intelligent as Mr. McCabe can think that paradox and jesting stop the way? It is solemnity that is stopping the way in every department of modern effort. It is his own favorite 'serious methods,' it is his own favorite 'momentousness,' it is his own favorite 'judgment' which stops the way everywhere."

Of course, this reply does not entirely answer whether Mr. Chesterton is sincere. It simply disposes of the question whether a man may be sincere and funny at the same time. Mr. McCabe might be able to find a good many instances in the writings of Mr. Chesterton where the author seems to be neither sincere nor funny, thereby enrolling himself in the lowest class of his generalizations. Mr. Chesterton has such an itch for debate that if all the good sides are chosen he is likely to rush to the assistance of the under fellow. He does this, not because he desires to deal in sophistries, but because he wishes to extricate the few grains of truth that may be found on even the weak side, and give them a currency. He seems to be a sort of a general inspector of things. He believes that nothing must pass him without undergoing the acid test. All time-honored phrases, all hoary maxims must come before the inquisition with fresh credentials. Nothing shall pass simply because it is old—it must be true. Mr. Chesterton is the greatest challenger of the day, and that is the reason why to many he has proved so inspirational. But the man who is always on sentry duty lives a precarious life; and especially is his a real danger when like Mr. Chesterton he always keeps up a clatter. A few well-aimed bullets from ambush are likely to find a shining mark. Mr. Chesterton is a loquacious sentinel; perhaps, we may say, a vociferous sentinel. He makes such a noise while on duty that he accomplishes two ends which are not included in the duties of his office; namely, that of calling the attention of the enemy to the outposts of the camp, and that of keeping his own soldiers awake by his unwonted noise. As a sentinel he practices no secretive qualities. He seems to court all kinds of disaster, and rather rejoices in the fact that he can be made a target for the sharpshooters of the enemy. But with these eccentricities it is still unwise to affirm that Mr. Chesterton is not sincere. It is hardly to be presumed that any man who is so spontaneous and fecund in his productions as Mr. Chesterton will take the time to go over all his work and check up his statements so that they may be made to tally. He is not a maker of systems, only a sort of rummager and critic in general. His great movement may produce carlessness and may account for the pattern coming out unmatched in the weaving. In this respect we may contrast him with Bernard Shaw. Mr. Shaw is a skeptic, and as Mr. Chesterton has shown a skeptic always gets over the ground slowly, because he has to test every step before he makes an advance. It is for this reason that practically all the works of Mr. Shaw are prefaces. He never has time to do anything more than to start. It requires faith to get things done in literature as well as in religion. The faith of Chesterton gives him celerity. He keeps swallow wings dipping everywhere. But to be perpetually on the wing, and at the same time to keep an accurate knowledge of the inches of soil above which one travels, is a difficult task. We do not believe that Mr. Chesterton is insincere because a few pin feathers of his imagination drop occasionally at our feet in a useless sort of a way. We do not know of any protracted argument upon which he has entered that does not show logical acumen and the utmost honesty.

But the greatness of a man must be found in the amount of constructive work he has done, and not upon his accuracy of detail in inconsequential matters. We believe that Mr. Chesterton has done some of the most valuable work for the cause of religion and theology that has been done by any of the men of his day. His is the advent of a literary man and a poet in a realm which in the past has practically precluded this type, and the result has been a happy one. But we must not expect that Mr. Chesterton will show the least bit of conventionality in the outline of his theme any more than in his treatment of the individual topics.

Mr. Chesterton as a protagonist for conservative religion first starts with an appeal for men to get some definite convictions. He contends that the race can get nowhere unless it believes something with tremendous earnestness. He shows that the weakness of our time springs from the false liberalism which is so prevalent. This recoil from the time when punishment was meted out to the heretic has been too far, and the result is that we as a race are trying to get along without the semblance of doctrine. We hold our views modestly or so lightly that we will trade them off with the first newcomer as boys trade knives "unsight and unseen." We think that it is gracious to be flexible, and to concur is always the part of a gentleman. We are sure that there will be no heretics burned at the stake to-day, and this is one of the proud boasts of our civilization. Is it not a sign that we have advanced? Have we not learned more of the spirit of brotherhood? and are we not now headed toward the millennium with a good running start that will soon bring us to the goal of happy days? But here Mr. Chesterton puts on a fearful frown, and his words are startling.

"It is foolish, generally speaking, for a philosopher to set fire to another philosopher in Smithfield Market because they do not agree in their theory of the universe. That was done very frequently in the last decadence of the Middle Ages, and it failed altogether in its object. But there is one thing that is infinitely more absurd and unpractical than burning a man for his philosophy. This is the habit of saying that his philosophy does not matter, and this is done universally in the Twentieth Century, in the decadence of the great revolutionary period. General theories are everywhere condemned; the doctrine of the Rights of Man is dismissed with the doctrine of the Fall of Man. Atheism itself is too theological for us to-day. Revolution itself is too much of a system; liberty itself is too much of a restraint. We will have no generalizations. Mr. Bernard Shaw has put the view in a perfect epigram, 'The golden rule is that there is no golden rule.' We are more and more to discuss details in art, politics, literature. A man's opinion on tramcars matters; his opinion on Botticelli matters; his opinion on all things does not matter. He may turn over and explore a million objects, but he must not find a strange object, the universe; for if he does he will have a religion, and be lost. Everything matters—except every thing."

Mr. Chesterton maintains that the most important thing about a man is his theory of the universe. It is practically the only thing that does matter. His voice becomes shrill and penetrating when he expresses his contempt for those who are too modest to have an opinion, and think that thereby they have taught a lesson of needful humility. There is something militant about these utterances. They cut like a knife to the marrow of our mental indifference as to the great things of the universe. It is useless to talk of progress until we have some definition of progress. A society of ants may be able to do some things remarkably well, but no one affirms that this society has advanced any since the days of Solomon. To define progress from the utilitarian standpoint may show a justification for our inventive age. But a progress that simply looks toward the convenience of man and has no contribution to make to the development of the finer faculties and sympathies of the man, is a progress hardly worth the mention. Mr. Chesterton has shown that the trouble of our day is the lack of definition. Doctrine is absolutely necessary for soul health. We must define the goal before we shall ever reach any goal worth the effort. We discuss the relation between doctrine and life and lay such emphasis on life that we forget that any respectable sort of life can only be attained because men believe in some sound doctrine.

But now the question arises, "What is the kind of doctrine that a man must believe?" This is, of course, the battleground for the theologians. Here Mr. Chesterton simply adopts the pragmatic method. What is it that we must believe for our highest good? This is the question that Mr. Chesterton asked himself before he accepted Christianity, and when he had satisfied himself as to the things which must be found in the highest character, then he was amazed to find all of the things of his quest in a conservative Christianity. In an interesting passage he tells how the freethinkers helped him to his belief:

"I never read a line of Christian apologetics. I read as little as I can of them now. It was Huxley and Herbert Spencer and Bradlaugh who brought me back to orthodox theology. They sowed in my mind the first wild doubts of doubt. Our grandmothers were quite right when they said that Tom Paine and the freethinkers unsettled the mind. They do. They unsettled mine horribly. The rationalist made me question whether reason was of any use whatever; and when I finished Herbert Spencer I had got as far as doubting (for the first time) whether evolution had occurred at all. As

I laid down the last of Colonel Ingersoll's atheistic lectures, the dreadful thought broke across my mind, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.' I was in a desperate way."

It may be a cause for felicitation for conservative Christianity that Mr. Chesterton did not in his early days turn to Christian Apologetics. His naturally pugnacious disposition would have found good room for sport in the great tomes with their immaculate systems, and there is a strong probability that he who has become one of the ablest apologists of the day might have been lost to Christianity before he had ever gotten in touch with its vital aspects. But his mind began to orient itself through opposition, and he found that the things which were bitterly assailed were the things which were most helpful for life. He saw that life fell to pieces if Christianity were gone—that it was the only philosophy or religion in the world that would answer all the need of man. It was then, through a contemplation of his needs, that he soon found his theology growing. He accepted pragmatism as a method but not as a philosophy. He declared that it was a good method to get started with, but that there were extremes of pragmatism that were destructive. For instance, pragmatism declares that a man must believe the thing that is for his good, but that he need not go into the realm of metaphysics and believe in the Absolute. But Mr. Chesterton asserted that the belief in the Absolute was just as necessary as the belief in anything that touched his daily needs. The belief in the Absolute was a daily need. The theology of Mr. Chesterton may then be looked upon as springing from experience. But he goes much farther when he begins to pick up the items of his belief. He makes an appeal to history. What things have prevailed throughout the centuries? these things are worthy of consideration. In a striking and eloquent passage on "The Paradoxes of Christianity" he speaks of the progress of orthodoxy.

"People have fallen into a foolish habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum, and safe. There never was anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy. It was sanity: and to be sane was more dramatic than to be mad. It was the equilibrium of a man behind madly rushing horses, seeming to stoop this way and to sway that, yet in every attitude having the grace of statuary and the accuracy of arithmetic. The Church in its early days went fierce and fast with any war horse; yet it is utterly unhistoric to say that she merely went mad along one idea, like a vulgar fanaticism. She swerved to left and right, so exactly as to avoid enormous obstacles. She left on one hand the huge bulk of Arianism, buttressed by all the worldly powers to make Christianity too worldly. The next instant she was swerving to avoid an orientalism, which would have made it too unworldly. The orthodox Church never took the tame course or accepted the conventions; the orthodox Church was never respectable. It would have been easier to have accepted the earthly power of the Arians. It would have been easy, in the Seventeenth Century, to fall into the bottomless pit of predestination. It is easy to be a madman; it is easy to be a heretic. It is always easy to let the age have its head; the difficult thing is to keep one's own It is always easy to be a modernist, as it is easy to be a snob. To have fallen into any one of those open traps of error and exaggeration which fashion after fashion and sect after sect set along the historic path of Christendom—that would indeed have been simple. It is always simple to fall; there are an infinity of angles at which one falls, only one at which one stands. To have fallen into any one of the fads from Gnosticism to Christian Science would indeed have been obvious and tame. But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure; and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling, but erect."

Mr. Chesterton is essentially a poet who has gotten loose in the realm of theology. He has brought his fancies and imaginations, all the hunger of his æsthetic nature, to the bar of Christianity. It may not be amiss to state that Christianity has satisfied his imagination more completely than it has satisfied his reason. Not that he finds that it is incomplete as a logical or reasonable system, but because he is inclined to look askant at any system that purports to come with complete logicality. But Christianity is far greater than a logical system. It fits into a man's highest imaginings. It comes to supply his wants. Let a man feel all the healthy hungerings of soul and he will find that Christianity has spread a banqueting table for him. It comes primarily to satisfy life. All systems that are the result of complete straightforward thinking end in complete nullity. Materialism is logical, but ends in inanity. Idealism, when thoroughly believed in, fits a man for a mad-house. Logic is a straight line between two points, but life is a meandering line. Christianity bends in and out with human life and fits it like a garment. Christianity is therefore paradoxical. It is true, but its virtues are not quite reasonable. The pagan virtues were reasonable. The pagan systems were straightforward systems of thought. They did not deviate from a predestined goal. Once given the premises and the end came out with sure precision. There was no stumbling, no taking of vagrant paths which led out into places where half-chaos reigned. The pagan world lived immersed in complete philosophies, but it lived but half a life. Christianity came with a full life. A man could not live by the bread of philosophy alone. He needed a food that the philosopher never dreamed of. The philosopher could not tell of his needs, much less map out the ways of his goings. If any one should then ask Mr. Chesterton, "Is not, then, your Christianity false if as you say it is not necessarily reasonable?" Mr. Chesterton might answer in several ways. In the first place, he might say that false is not the antithesis of reasonable. Or again, he might say that there are two kinds of reason—the larger reason which takes in the whole of life, and with which Christianity is never at variance; and the reason which moves forever on in a straight line through the help of a syllogism, and which is altogether too meagre a standard with which to measure Christianity. Take faith, hope, charity, and humility, four of the distinctive virtues of Christianity, and each of them holds a paradox within its meaning. Faith means a belief in the incredible, or it is no virtue. Hope means hoping when things are hopeless, or it is no virtue. Charity means pardoning what is unpardonable, or it is no virtue. Christian humility means the negation of self, but it also means the finding of self. The reason why these great virtues were not discovered by any of the pagan philosophers was because they lay out of the line of the straightforward reason. They could talk about temperance and justice, for these were perfectly understandable virtues, and could be evolved by reasonable processes.

When we come, therefore, to ask Mr. Chesterton what are his answers to these so-called logical systems of philosophy, he is perfectly consistent with his own philosophy of Christianity. He simply shows how they debilitate life, and some of the most crushing things which have been said within recent years against the various philosophies have been said by Mr. Chesterton.

In speaking of Nietzsche, he said: "Nietzsche's aristocracy has about it all the sacredness which belongs to the weak. When he makes us feel that he can not endure the innumerable faces, the incessant voices, the overpowering omnipresence which belongs to the mob, he will have the sympathy of anybody who has ever been sick on a steamer or tired in a crowded omnibus. Every man has hated mankind when he was less than a man. Every man has had humanity in his eyes like a blinding fog, humanity in his nostrils like a suffocating smell. But when Nietzsche has the incredible humor and lack of imagination to ask us to believe that his aristocracy is an aristocracy of strong muscles or an aristocracy of strong wills, it is necessary to point out the truth. It is an aristocracy of weak nerves."

Of Herbert Spencer he said: "Herbert Spencer would have been greatly annoyed if any one called him an imperialist, and therefore it is highly regrettable that nobody did. But he was an imperialist of the lowest type. He popularized this contemptible notion that the size of the solar system ought to overawe the spiritual dogma of man. Why should a man surrender his dignity to the solar system any more than to a whale? If mere size proves that man is not the image of God, then a whale may be the image of God; a somewhat formless image, what one might call an impressionist portrait. It is quite futile to argue that man is small compared to the cosmos, for man was always small compared to the nearest tree. But Herbert Spencer, in his headlong imperialism, would insist that we had in some way been conquered and annexed by the astronomical universe."

What he said of Marcus Aurelius, could he not have said as well of Emerson? "He is an unselfish egoist. An unselfish egoist is a man who has pride without the excuse of passion. Of all conceivable forms of enlightenment the worst is what these people call the Inner Light. Of all horrible religions the most horrible is the worship of the god within. Anybody who knows anybody knows how it would work; any one who knows any one from the Higher Thought Centre knows how it does work. That Jones shall worship the god within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones. Let Jones worship the sun or the moon—anything, rather than the Inner Light; let Jones worship cats or crocodiles, if he can find any in his street, but not the god within. Christianity came into the world firstly in order to assert with violence that a man had not only to look inwards, but to look outwards, to behold with astonishment and enthusiasm a divine company and a divine captain. The only fun of being a Christian was that a man was not left alone with the Inner Light, but definitely recognized an outer light, fair as the sun, clear as the moon, terrible as an army with banners."

When Mr. Chesterton deals with materialism, idealism, stoicism, and other philosophical systems, he simply shows the effect that such philosophies have upon human life. His method, as we have stated, is pragmatic. What lowers the tone of life, he holds must be false and must ultimately pass away. One of the most interesting and humorous passages in Chesterton's writings was with Mr. Blatchford and involved the great question of the free will. Mr. Blatchford was a determinist, but he forgot to always apply his philosophy to the practical things of life; in fact, he failed to see that his philosophy could not be applied to the things of life. In one of the moments of his entire forgetfulness he stated that if he had found a small boy hitting his sister he would not punish the boy, but would make an appeal to him in these words:

"My dear lad, you must n't hit a girl. It is cowardly. Men do n't hit women. And you must not allow yourself to get into a passion. If you do, your temper will master you. Come, laddie, be a gentleman. Who will love Sis if you do n't? What if she did tease you? Let her. She likes it, bless her. And you are not a baby. Pooh! do n't be a muff. Go and put your cap on, and we 'll have a game of cricket."

Now there is no doubt that this would be counted good advice by any one who did not have any philosophy to speak of, but Mr. Blatchford had been too voluble with his philosophy, and forthwith Mr. Chesterton gets him on the hip in an approved fashion.

"You say that you would talk like this to the little boy. I hope that you will forgive me when I say that I think that you are wise to choose a little boy: I should recommend a very little boy. But do not talk like that to any one who has read your philosophical works. If the little boy, instead of confining himself to adventure stories (which may be called the literature of Free Will), were to equip himself largely from back numbers of *The Clarion*, with your philosophy and your phraseology, he would, I think, open his infant lips and deliver a crushing reply as follows:

"What meaning am I to attach, my dear father, to your extraordinary statement that I must not hit Zenobia? That I have already done it proves that I must have done it. That blow was the inevitable outcome of heredity and environment. My rather ferocious heredity (derived possibly from yourself), the environment (otherwise Zenobia), produced a result like a result in chemistry. You say it is cowardly. I assure you, with scientific calm, that I was born cowardly. As for your assertion that 'men do n't hit women,' my very slight knowledge of life enables me to meet it with a direct negative. Men do. I am agnostic upon the question you raise of who is to love Sis if I do n't. But I am quite clear that somebody or nobody must do it if I can't. Barring the expression, 'bless her'—which, as probably an abbreviation of 'God bless her,' I can not but regard as a relic of barbarism—I am quite clear to allow you to love the young woman if you can. It is a trick of your inherent temperament to love Zenobia. It is a trick of mine to hit her. Are you answered?' "

We believe that Mr. Chesterton has said some of the shrewdest things which have been said by any man of his day on the relation of spirituality to evolution and upon the absolute untenableness of the agnostic's position. His criticism of a science that is ever looking for its god through a microscope is severe, but just.

But it must be acknowledged that Mr. Chesterton shows his adroitness when he refuses to confine himself solely to the pragmatic method of determining the validity of the orthodox doctrine. Pragmatism is a good club in his hand to turn against some of the philosophical systems of the day, but when he comes to build a constructive system, he finds that he is compelled to solve some problems that pragmatism can but scantily touch. When he deals with the miraculous in the Scriptures he simply asserts his belief as based upon the historical evidence. He has made one startling statement which may bring in a long train of suggestions. He says: "All the towering materialism which dominated the modern mind rests ultimately upon one assumption; a false assumption. It is supposed that if a thing goes on repeating itself it is probably dead; a piece of clockwork. . . . But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, 'Do it again' to the sun, and every evening, 'Do it again' to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we."

We can easily surmise that a view like this might subject Mr. Chesterton to some trouble in accounting for a line of phenomena not so pleasant to contemplate as the creation of a daisy; but as Mr. Chesterton maintains a lively faith in the existence of a personal devil, he would have a cogent answer forthcoming.

No one can fail to note the emphasis which Mr. Chesterton has laid upon the characteristic of humility. It is an emphasis which seems to be entirely disproportionate to the spirit in which he himself normally writes. And yet one of the strongest contributions which he has made to Christianity is the support which he has given to the virtue of humility. Because of this attitude, we note the contrast between him and Emerson and see how his message fills out the data of defect in Emerson. The older writer made perhaps his chief contribution to literature and life when he insisted that the spirit must be free in its searching for truth. When Emerson touched the subject of self-reliance, he brought emancipation to many who had permitted the shackles of custom and tradition to be placed upon them. He was hailed as the apostle of common sense, the liberator of the bound reason, and he gave the cue to much of the most inspiring literature which has been written since his day. But to many of us the inspiration which came from Emerson was similar to the inspiration which many have found in the use of wine. It has set the senses to tingling; it has thrown some rare pictures of progress before the eye; it has seemed to put in our hands a Magna Charta of liberty; it has brought about a sense of spiritual and intellectual muscularity, until we thought that Merlin's gleam had appeared upon the clouds and that we were able to follow and find it. But when the beaded bubbles winking at the brim of the wine cup had lost their effervescing power, then the vision faded, and the day once more came back with much of its fog and chill. We have not concluded that the inspiration of Emerson was the inspiration of intoxication. We are not quite the men we were before his spirit touched us. We have gained, but the law of compensation he has expounded has been manifested, and we fear that something has slipped away even when we thought we were enriching ourselves with the pearls of his thought. To find out what that definite loss has been is to define the limit of his contribution to us and to reduce by so much our estimation of his greatness. We believe that the essential weakness of Emerson was his lack of humility. It was the one great virtue of the soul that he would not trust himself to write upon. Love, friendship, heroism, spiritual laws were themes he dwelt upon with surpassing brilliancy. But humility was opposed to his doctrine of self-reliance and was destructive of his entire theory of greatness. He held that a man was made not to stoop, but to climb. He was to open the doors and let the spirit out. His doctrine was the doctrine of self-emancipation. A man is the measure of all things. Let a man stand upon his own instincts, and he may go on to deification. Tradition has been the bane to growth. We have been stumbling over the outside things, but a man should not stumble at all. This is Emerson's doctrine. It has the fascination of all doctrines that throw a man back upon himself and sprinkle rose water upon his character. It has the fascination of all systems that clamor for self-admiration. We have never outgrown the period of life in which we are unwilling to receive compliments. We are sometimes too shrewd to take everything at its face value as expressing our greatness, but what we consider the well-meant and judicial word of praise we are ever listening for. And Emerson's doctrine seems the most inspiring doctrine, for it makes us think well of ourselves. It places the highest approval—namely, our own—upon our powers and performances. But this self-laudation can not go on forever. There is something outside of a man that he must listen to. There are some great performances going on in the cosmos that should call for his attention. The rhythmical march of the spheres is not through his command. He has not made the tides. He can not guide Arcturus with his sons, and has hardly explained the balancing of the clouds; and a man can not forever keep up this little comedy of a self-elysium and self-omniscience while the thunder of greater things is going on beyond him. Emerson got self-raised to the nth power, and that, of course, meant that God must go, and, with the dismissal of God, there was no need of holding to the doctrines of sin and disaster; and Emerson finally got man to a little self-made heaven, with a few stars and a crescent moon shining a few feet above his head, like some Pyramus and Thisbe theatrical entertainment of our days of boyhood. But we much doubt the wisdom of this method of making a man wise and happy. Mr. Chesterton comes with the great doctrine of humility. In a surface way it does not seem so inspiring as Emerson's doctrine of self-exaltation, but it comes with an authority which should outweigh that of Emerson, namely, Jesus Christ's of Nazareth. It is expressed in the phrase, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant," and the working of the law is expressed in, "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Humility is the only virtue that brings the world as a contribution to the soul. "The meek shall inherit the earth." Mr. Chesterton has said with great truth, "Humility is the thing which is forever renewing the earth and the stars. It is humility and not duty which preserves the stars from wrong, from the unpardonable wrong of casual resignation; it is through humility that the most ancient heavens for us are fresh and strong." These are wise words, and the world much needs to hear them spoken. If the world is to regain for us its lost youth; if the paths are to run out as of old to the haunted chambers of the spring, where our loves are caught with the wonders of the budding life and the miracles which are working through the sod; if we are to keep our face shining because the leaves of life are turned as in the days of the horn book by some wise-faced jinn who carries sweet magic in his finger tips—then we must relearn the lesson of humility. Turn not to Emerson, but find our way back with bowed heads into the presence of Him who said, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

It is to the honor of Mr. Chesterton that he has not considered Christianity simply a creed to be propped, but a life which is to leaven the world. We believe that his greatest contribution to the cause of religion is the enthusiasm with which he contemplates the possibility of a world conquest. In that wonderful chapter in "Orthodoxy," called "The Flag of the World," he has said some of the most trenchant things which have been said for the missionary spirit. Christianity is in the world for conquest. It is not here simply to furnish a creed for thought, or a speculative system for the Academicians. It comes with a shout to attract attention; it comes with an urgency to demand service. Its invitation is not alone tender, but peremptory. "Go into the highways and compel them to come." It is a gospel of force, the greatest force in all the world—that of love. It is not a maudlin sympathy, a faint, disappearing desire that men might find God, but a love that overcomes with a warrior's zest—imposing, dynamic, universal. When men understand this power, then the world will soon put on the garments of righteousness. These are burning words:

"For our titanic purposes of faith and revolution, what we need is not the cold acceptance of the world as a compromise, but some way in which we can heartily hate and heartily love it. We do not want joy and anger to neutralize each other and produce a surly contentment; we want a fiercer delight and a fiercer discontent. We have to feel the universe at once as an Ogre's castle, to be stormed, and yet as our own cottage, to which we return at evening. No one doubts that an ordinary man can get on with this world, but we demand not strength enough to get on with it, but strength enough to get it on. Can he hate it enough to change it, and yet love it enough to think it worth changing? Can he look up at its colossal good without once feeling acquiescence? Can he look up at its colossal evil without once feeling despair? Can he, in short, be not only a pessimist and an optimist, but a fanatical pessimist and a fanatical optimist? Is he enough of a pagan to die for the world, and enough of a Christian to die to it? In this combination, I maintain, it is the rational optimist who fails, the irrational optimist who succeeds. He is ready to smash the whole universe for the sake of itself."

We believe that Mr. Chesterton has come to the cause of Christianity as one of her most doughty champions. With immense common sense, he has looked at her claims and has given his acquiescence. He has called upon Christianity to make a test of life and not of creeds, and herein lies his great superiority over the ordinary apologist. Not that he has rejected creeds; he is one of the most stalwart champions for the need of doctrine. He has a most assertive dogmatism, but he has gained his doctrine as he has seen Christianity deal with life. There are fields of theology which he has not touched and which he would not care to touch—the technical fields, where the higher critic may find his labors. He has not gone to the far borders of the field, but in the large, tillable centers where life may be planted which may grow to large harvests he has been pulling weeds, and, like a good gardener, preparing the soil, so that when the Sower passes, with His swinging arm throwing seed, as though it were carelessly, none of the seed shall fall out beyond the places where the harvest may be thirty, sixty, an hundred-fold.

William De Morgan

IN literature, as in business, there is always room at the top. The lower and the middle slopes of Parnassus are kept comfortably crowded, but there are large spaces of azure at the summit. *Per aspera ad astra* is, however, a fairly good description of the dual difficulty of getting to stars or mountain summits of literature. The men who constitute themselves the watch dogs of the literary output are content that men should essay a short dash or a mediocre scramble up the steep sides, but when they see a man with a steady, determined push of the shoulder, and, with a good ankle and thigh brace, climbing over the craggy places, and waving adieu to the contented stragglers who are pressing sweet grapes on the lower sunlit levels—then the warders cry, "Ho, there! advance and give the password." The critic is always jealous of the man who would attempt to press the ground near the sacred and immortal dead. But here comes one of the strangest figures that ever attempted the perilous ascent. He was sixty-five years old when he started to make a sprint for the summit. He was sixty-five years old when he presented "Joseph Vance" as his credentials, and asked leave to pass the warder's challenges, and go where all shadows fall downward. An athlete, aged in years, but with a twinkle in his eye which counted for merriment, and with an optimism which carried sunlight into dark places, he had with one breath and burst of speed distanced his competitors and came unpanting to face the last inquisition.

What is to be done with William De Morgan? He seems to have gotten on the hands of the critics, and no perfunctory washing or shaking is likely to dislodge him. He is to be taken seriously or not at all. His friends have demanded that the temple of fame be unlocked, and that the janitors dust out a good place for his pedestal. Just how high a place for him, is still to be decided by the debating clubs; but his pedestal must be wheeled around somewhere in the neighborhood of Dickens and Thackeray because of certain similar exuberances, comicalities, and tragedies.

It is easy to write literary criticism from the *a priori* standpoint, but the chief objection to this method is that it is not worth while. For instance, Mr. De Morgan published his first book when he was sixty-five. That is a ripe age for a man to take off his cap and bow to his literary confreres. We do not know that any other man has knocked so late in life at the door of our literary suffrage, but the case is an easy one for *a priori* treatment. Mr. De Morgan should have a good literary style, for age and wide reading should help to this excellency. Score one point for the method. Secondly, all good writing must be experiential. Mr. De Morgan, having passed so long from the period of childhood and youth, can enter into the early experiences and passions with but a half divination, but should be particularly strong in his delineation of age. Score up against the *a priori* method confusion and nonsense. Thirdly, when a man has passed far in life he becomes disillusioned; therefore Mr. De Morgan will keep the meridian sunlight out of his books and will write with the shadows gathering westerly. Score more confusion for the method. Fourthly, as one gets older he becomes less romantic and more realistic; therefore Mr. De Morgan will become increasingly slow with the encroachment of years. And then there is flaunted in our face "The Affair of Dishonor" next to his latest work, and by odds the swiftest moving of all his stories.

It is best to approach Mr. De Morgan with the smallest number of prepossessions that we can carry to his works; for like most men of genius, he has a peculiar way of upsetting most literary calculations which are made beforehand to entrap him. There is one hint, however, which has given us a method of approach. The statement that the author has come to revive the old traditions of the great novelists of the early Victorian period prepares our mind for the three-decker and the slow movement. And if these are the things we want we shall not go away disappointed. Mr. De Morgan shows no hurry in developing his characters. He takes his time and your time as well. Those who are accustomed to the "penny dreadful" and "the shilling shocker," will have to take some advice on the cultivation of patience before they can get through these ponderous tomes. They may start well. Mr. De Morgan always pushes his readers off with a shove. You go so fast in the first few pages that you grip at your skirts and feel the wind whistling by like the draught which is sometimes sucked down through a canon. But this swift movement is only for the nonce. It is only a device to get the reader headed toward the end—a skillful device—and then the pace slackens. Mr. De Morgan prefers to loiter than to chase. His characters interest him more than the story he is trying to tell. Not that he is a poor story-teller. He can be surpassingly good when he chooses to be, easily the superior here of Dickens or Thackeray; but he loves his created children so well that he perpetually seeks their company, and smiles or cries at their pranks or pains. It is because of this slow movement after the story has started that the modern reader must orient himself to catch the beauty of Mr. De Morgan. The judicious art of skipping, which has been preached with such unction and acceptability, can hardly be practiced on Mr. De Morgan. He demands your attention every moment, and the flagging interest will be sure to miss something which is of vital importance. It is this close attention that we are loath to give. Our habit is to play hare and hounds with a novel, get to the end with a break-neck speed—over fences, it may be—bag the quarry, and then off for another hair-raising exploit. And when a man like Mr. De Morgan comes and insists that we jog along in an aimless sort of fashion, get introduced to a few commonplace people, keep up an intimate acquaintance with them through several of the sunniest days of our reading vacation, then we feel that the imposition is too great. We are traveling by steam and electricity now. Autos and aeroplanes are at our doors or tethered in our back yards. The day of the tortoise is over, and we are to wheel with the winds on the country roads or to swim with the birds in the upper currents. Now it is easy to read the first four volumes of Mr. De Morgan and apply this reasoning and conclude that the good custom of Dickens and Thackeray promoted to our day might corrupt the literary world. There is some reason in this criticism. Every author should take note of two psychologies—the psychology of the character he is trying to draw, and the psychology of the reader whose interest he is trying to enlist. It is not enough to draw a character with perfect similitude and forget that the same character is to make its appeal to men. The good story-teller will always be sought after, and it may be safely assumed that what lies fundamentally in the consciousness of the ordinary reader will have some high justification in a perfect system of criticism. We believe that Mr. De

Morgan has much extraneous material. Dialogues are carried on when nothing is added to the character and the story is only delayed. Pin heads of realism show on every page which prove that things are real, but which are unnecessary and clog the story. And then Mr. De Morgan has some uninteresting people, and we may announce as a safe canon of criticism that the more uninteresting people are in themselves, the less time they should be given to exploit their littleness. Take, for instance, the book "It Never Can Happen Again." Professor Phelps has pointed out that Challis and his wife and Judith Arkroyd interest us but little, and yet there seems to be an interminable amount of their conversation and acts. On the other hand, I consider that Blind Jim and Lizarann are the most moving characters of all Mr. De Morgan's creations, with nothing in Dickens or in any other writer to surpass them. A few dozen pages more to let the sunlight stream forth from these cast-offs, and we would gladly forego the long bilious contentions of the three-star posers. Or, again, take the last book of Mr. De Morgan, "A Likely Story." We believe that this is the poorest of all his books. We can not but put down Reginald and Euphemia as fools.

And while we believe that the hand of Mr. De Morgan is as unerring in drawing their emotions as in anything else he has drawn, yet we are not interested in the characters. We recall Madeline for her sweet womanliness. We see once more the master mind in the constructiveness of the story, running through all the eccentricities of a talking picture four hundred years old, with an analogue of an armless painter to match an armless soldier; but when the story has closed we have gained but few friends that we care to ever recall to our memory. But when we have thus criticised Mr. De Morgan we find that we have been criticising some portion of his work and not his entire work. For as regarding the characters of Mr. De Morgan, he has painted a gallery full of many of the most winsome and beloved faces of any of our great writers. And as to the slowness of movement, we must take it as we may choose for better or for worse, with the understanding that if we want swiftness, Mr. De Morgan can satisfy us. Whatever rank "An Affair of Dishonor" may have among the works of Mr. De Morgan, no one can surely object to any slowness in the story. Here is a romance pure and simple. Mr. De Morgan, like a Colossus, has got his legs astride two empires. He asserts the right of eminent domain in the realist's realm and has carte blanche to trip the race courses of the romancer's land. If the author shall live long enough to give us a few more romances we shall have material whereby we may be better able to argue the respective merits of the romancer's or the realist's art. Our difficulty in this contention has always been to get two authors of equal learning, expression, and outlook, and who are each devoted to the opposite school of fiction writing. And here comes Mr. De Morgan in a most accommodating manner and writes both styles to help out the controversy. Thus far the slow De Morgan is better than the swift De Morgan. He has not equaled Thackeray when Thackeray turned aside to write "Henry Esmond," nor has he been as successful as Dickens in "The Tale of Two Cities." With Mr. De Morgan we are willing to take more time to cultivate the acquaintance of "Joseph Vance," and get an insight into the sweet patience and gentleness that has grown with pain and much disappointment, than to sweep pell-mell through "An Affair of Dishonor," lay it down with a gasp, and in a few days recall it as a story well told, with some surprising dramatic situations, but with little to recall with loving care.

But a little more attention should be paid to the romance, "An Affair of Dishonor." It is always hazardous for a man to change a style of writing which has brought him a stable reputation. Our age has become so specialized that the conviction is quite general that a man can do only one thing well, and when a writer attempts too many fields he is likely to be criticised before he is examined. Anthony Hope made an instant success as a romancer when he wrote "A Prisoner of Zenda," but when he became a vender of social chit-chat he lost his old clientele. Arnold Bennett may claim two classes of adherents—those who followed him in the earlier days when the spirit of romance was in his veins, and those who found their attachments when he became a profound though morbid realist as in "The Old Wives' Tales." But it will be difficult to find any one who can get their sympathies catholic enough to take in both these periods in the life of Mr. Bennett. When Mr. De Morgan wrote his earlier works he touched a chord which immediately brought the elect to his side, but when he gave "An Affair of Dishonor" to the public, the change of style was so marked that it immediately fell under the ban of the critic. The author had departed from his earlier Victorian method, which defection met with the disapproval of the literary censors. There were some who insisted that the work was his best, but they were so evidently under the spell of the romancer's spirit that their decision did not count in high quarters. The result of this criticism brought about a strange and somewhat humorous turn of affairs in the mind of Mr. De Morgan. In an appendix to his last novel, "A Likely Story," he discusses the criticism made upon "An Affair of Dishonor." He quotes his adverse critics with seeming great gusto, and especially one critic who affirmed that while there was a story in "An Affair of Dishonor," yet any man who attempted to excavate it "must tie a wet towel round his head and clench his teeth, and prepare to face hours of digging and scraping." But the avalanche of criticism produced its effect upon Mr. De Morgan. In his last volume he returns to the breezy, chatty style of his earlier books, and in his postscript declares that, so far as practical, he will not attempt anything more like his romance. If he keeps to this half promise—there is so much persiflage in his apology that we hardly know how to take him—we shall not be able to get any vivid comparison between Mr. De Morgan as a realist and as a romancer. We can not conceive that the rapid-fire guns of Mr. De Morgan's romance will at any future time produce as great an effect as has been done in his slow-moving, many-colored, realistic pageant. But it is surely unwise to say that he can not write a romance. Had he not at first through "Joseph Vance" found a seat among the immortals and in its place had presented as his credentials "An Affair of Dishonor," many would have placed their finger on their lips, demanding silence in anticipation of some great thing. But "Joseph Vance" was too sweetly winning to permit a change in the craftsmanship of the author, and the early followers of Mr. De Morgan were as incensed over the change as if the Harpies had suddenly pounced upon a banquet and befouled the feast.

But we may elaborate the ability of Mr. De Morgan to tell a story. Every perfect piece of novel-writing will have one or more stories within the story, but told in a way that will not mar the unity. In other words, there is the inside story and the outside story. There are many writers who can tell the inside story, which is the story of the single incident, but who can not get the inside into a comfortable casing, like the boy who has discomposed his first watch to get the "tick" in running order, and who always finds that he has an etcetera of pins, ratchets, and wheels which defy his attempts at recomposition. The outside case is not large enough to hold the necessary things which have grown out of his research. This larger story in literature we give the name of constructiveness, or borrow an architectural term and call it architectonics. The perfect story should round up all the facts, leave no warts or other excrescenses to show, and get all the winds once more locked up in Pandora's box. It is not necessary to claim that Mr. De Morgan is perfect in this respect, for we have suggested that his prolixity has been evident when his characters were not growing or offering further explanation for their existence. Charles Reade had this gift to a remarkable degree, and even Hall Caine—if the descent is not too rapid—will here rank with the masters. The romancer has a better chance to get credited with this accomplishment than the realist. But of all the earlier Victorian realists, we know of no one who has the constructive element so highly developed as has Mr. De Morgan. We will have to come to the modern men like Hardy or Howells to find his equal or superior. The story of the bones is always cropping out in "Alice for Short," and every time they come to light a stride is taken in the story. One of the finest illustrations in all his works of his great constructive power is the way that "Somehow Good" ends. We were in the midst of mystery when the word "finis" was about to be written, and suddenly the keystone slipped into the arch when Sally made her well-nigh fatal venture and rescued Fenwick. Then the question concerning "the horrible baby," which had so long irritated Fenwick, lost its sting, and the shadows which had gathered about the birth of Sally were melted down in the great white light of her sacrifice. Fenwick had been saved by her who was his embodied fear, and poetic justice came at the end to adorn the tale. This ability to take an incident and run it into the warp and woof of the story, reappearing here and there to make up the pattern, is a rare gift. Dickens and Thackeray, however superior they may be in other respects, must here yield to Mr. De Morgan.

In the characterizations of Mr. De Morgan the similarity to Dickens has been traced by several critics. Others have seen in them a likeness to Thackeray. That he resembles both is evident, but that he has been influenced more by Dickens is a confession from Mr. De Morgan himself. But no one will accuse him of being an imitator of either of these writers. It seems that he has unconsciously sought a synthesis of both and has succeeded. Christopher Vance, Major Roper, Major Lund, Lizarann, Jim, Baron Kreutzkammer, Mr. Verrinder, Pope and Chappell, Brownrigg, Mrs. Gapp—these have the benediction of Dickens resting upon them, while Joseph Vance is the best illustration of Thackeray, minus the satire of the great novelist. But when we speak of the similarity between Dickens and Mr. De Morgan, we should note the similarity with the difference. Some one has declared that the characters of Dickens are static. They are caught at some angle of eccentricity and must be ever viewed from that angle. The element of truth in this criticism is obvious, but to make this criticism inclusive of all the works of Dickens is to generalize falsely. Mr. Chesterton is nothing if not brilliant, and his estimate of Dickens is startling, suggestive, and only partly true. He says:

"Dickens was a mythologist rather than a novelist; he was the last of the mythologists, and perhaps the greatest. He did not always manage to make his characters men, but he always managed, at the least, to make them gods. They are creatures like Punch or Father Christmas. They live statically, in a perpetual summer of being themselves. It was not the aim of Dickens to show the effect of time and circumstance upon a character. It is not even his aim to show the effect of character on time and circumstance. It is worth remark in passing, that whenever he tried to describe change in a character he made a mess of it, as in the repentance of Dombey or the apparent deterioration of Boffin. It was his aim to show character hung in a kind of happy void, in a world apart from time—yes, and essentially apart from circumstance, though the phrase may seem odd in connection with the godlike "horseplay" of "Pickwick."

This is brilliant, wonderfully penetrative, but not quite accurate. An admirer of Dickens who has been loath to fall into the present literary depreciation of his favorite, who has viewed with misgiving the attempt to get

Thackeray under all the crowns worth while, while Dickens has been dismissed from serious consideration, will find another footing for his appreciation. To some the art of Thackeray has seemed finer than the art of Dickens, for two reasons: First, his better command of the resources of the language; and secondly, his ability to trace the change of character through the play of time or circumstance. But the question is a debatable one whether the divination of the author who is able to trace the growth or degeneration of character is greater than that of the author who can catch the salient characteristic or eccentricity and let the life be shown as by instantaneous photography. Thackeray needs a time exposure to develop his negative, while Dickens is rushing everywhere taking snapshots of everything and every man he meets. It is to be noted that the method of Dickens will fill up the gallery with portraits quicker than the method of Thackeray; and in the cases of these two authors there is little doubt that as to the vividness of impression, the palm rests with Dickens. Even the minor characters of Dickens stand out as though seared on the eyeball with a lightning's flash. The question for similitude may be decided for Thackeray; but the genius that can conceive a character instantly and hang a tag on it so that it will never be lost in the crowd, even though that character remain statically poised, is as great a genius as he who can trace the motives and passions in their effect upon character.

But the error in the estimate of Mr. Chesterton in regard to Dickens is the assumption that all the characters of Dickens are of the static kind. The genius of Dickens, however, can not be expressed in such a simple and concise way. The comical characters and those which border on the grotesque are quite aptly described in the phrase of Mr. Chesterton. But almost any of his mature works, leaving out, of course, his Pickwick, will prove that Dickens can show the effect of time and circumstance on his characters. Sidney Carton can not be envisaged by any one paragraph. His character, which started from the mud sills of society, grows until it puts on wings at the guillotine. Ralph Nickleby, on the other hand, is a study in degeneration worthy the realist's art. In "David Copperfield," "Oliver Twist," "Old Curiosity Shop," there are abundant traces of his ability to study motives and their changes on character. Now Mr. De Morgan has the ability to seize the outstanding peculiarity and impress it on the memory, but he can not throw them out in such sheer perspective as can Dickens. We hesitate to let this sentence go, for there rises before us Blind Jim, Lizarann, and Brownrigg to condemn us; but the statement may be made as comprising a general rule without taking note of the exceptions. Then again, Mr. De Morgan is not as instantaneous as is Mr. Dickens, and consequently can not boast so great a gallery. With a half dozen or more exceptions, Mr. De Morgan is compelled to heave against his characters the blows of circumstance before he can get them fit for close keeping in the memory. It may be said that his art is finer but less vivid in drawing characters than Dickens'.

But Mr. De Morgan discerns character accurately. He has an unerring instinct for the vital. We think that the most perilous path to tread that he has undertaken is that of Lucindy in "An Affair of Dishonor." Justice demanded that the end of this story turn out differently from the real end. A woman eloping with her seducer is not supposed to have any high honor; but Mr. De Morgan, however, has given this woman some high qualities. When she finds that her betrayer has killed her father she attains such a fervor of indignation against him that there seems some promise that she will do the just thing. She left him, which met with our approval. She showed some trace of breeding when she got mad, and the forecasting spirit, which always runs along the line of poetic justice, declared that the rumpus would end with a good killing, effected by the heavenly sword-play of Rudolph, the brother. But all the plans wither away and all the prognostications come to naught. The seducer is but wounded, and Lucinda, because she was born, brought up, and lived the fool, kept her first estate and played the fool in the end. Mr. De Morgan was too wise to let this strange mixture of good and bad do a superlatively wise and womanly thing at the close of her days, even though justice was clamoring for something uplifting to be done.

It may be safely said that the characterizations of the women in Mr. De Morgan's books are as accurately drawn as those of the men. We expect that a man will know men, but we are not sure that he can get a woman limned with any discernment. Stevenson got everything good in a romance except a woman, and the nearest he could get to a woman was a simulacrum like those rigged out in a woman's toggery and movable only with mechanism. On the other hand, Marie Correli never had a dream of what was in the heart of a man. She angled for him in two worlds, but like an inexperienced fisherman, did not get a bite. She dropped the plummet into the abyss and talked about the sorrows of Satan until the world laughed at the fun. She courageously rushed at the master Christian with her scalpel and anatomical chart, but the real master Christian put up a face at her and then disappeared in smoke and clouds. But Mr. De Morgan has a feminine intuition. His characters are lifelike. Lossie, Janey, Alice, Peggy, Rosalind, Sallie, Laetitia, Lavinia, Judith, Lucinda, Madeline, Euphemia—these are all unmistakably women, good, bad, and indifferent. How finely differentiated he has made them! Lossie, the unconscious flirt, or the gracious winning woman (so hard is it to decide) who has won the heart of Joe and keeps him steadied for life's tasks; Janey, sweet and retiring, with but little promise at first for coming praise, but who grows into sweet wifely splendor until her memory becomes ineffaceable; Alice, who brings into the world the taint of bad birth and poor breeding, but whose environment in the Heath family puts the color and glow of sweet and winning virtue into her character, and she grows up as pure and untainted as the water-lily whose roots have sunk in the scum of ponds; Rosalind, the mysterious woman, with a shadow clinging to her early life which is never quite dissolved, making her after and mature life a penance, full of fear that the husband that she has lost and found, and found only to lavish the tides of full love upon him, may penetrate the mystery of his own personality and come to despise her, full of fear until the morning breaks and the shadows flee away and the new times are better than the ancient times; Sallie, the irrepressible, a butterfly with sunshine on the wings, as inconsequential as the shadows dropped by the clouds on the meadows, not serious enough for one good love scene—no wonder that Mr. De Morgan made a botch of it when he tried to portray with unction the scene of her engagement to Vereker—and yet withal, enough salt in her character to keep her little world about her sweet; Peggy, the most nimble and facile of all Mr. De Morgan's women, with the shrewdest mother-wit in getting lovers together, diplomatic and gracious, a model wife; Laetitia, the disciplinarian, who keeps tab on her feelings, who examines all points of the compass before she speaks, just the sort of woman to elope when her heart met the right entanglement and opposition confronted her; Euphemia, a silly married woman, silly when exposed in cold print, but human and real enough to find her emotions, if not her acts, expressed in more than half the race, leaving her husband on the most baseless suspicion, making his life and her life a living hell, until through the womanly courage and diplomacy of Madeline, one of Mr. De Morgan's fair creations, they are brought together again in happiness; and then the unpleasant women, Judith, Lavinia, and Lucinda, how skillfully are they drawn! We do not know of any portrait of any one superior to Lavinia Straker as the woman adventurer. Her wiles were so amazing and subtle that she found little difficulty in entrapping Charles Heath, one of the best of all the men of Mr. De Morgan.

But Mr. De Morgan has been as successful in drawing children as men and women. In this particular line of delineation the natural supposition is that he would be weak. With the advance of age the recollection of the things of childhood becomes blurred. But Mr. De Morgan's divination is penetrative. George Eliot did not more accurately describe the life of Tom and Maggie Tulliver in "The Mill on the Floss" than has Mr. De Morgan described the life of children in the characters of Joe, Lossie, Janey, Alice, and Lizarann. He knows all their ways, their thoughts, their franknesses, their deceits, and should one desire to live once more his life from childhood to old age, these books will well revive the memories.

One of the qualities of Mr. De Morgan which makes him eminently readable and provokes after perusals, is his fine sense of humor. There is hardly a page in any of his books in which this quality is not noticeable. Mr. De Morgan himself is a sane, healthy, humorous soul, who must effervesce good cheer at every pore. He continues in this mood even when a tragedy is in making. At times his tragedies and comedies get woefully compounded, as in the case of the delirium tremens of Steptoe and his subsequent death—one of the most vivid scenes the literature of drink can produce. The first chapter of "Joseph Vance" is so delightful in humor that it must remain in the memory, and yet it is the beginning of a long tragedy of pain and disappointment which makes this book one of the saddest in literature. We know of no author who gets more humor out of child life than does Mr. De Morgan in the childish prattle of Alice. Several incidents in this book remind us of the humorous touches of Norman Duncan in "The Cruise of the Shining Light." Christopher Vance exudes good cheer and optimism, and all the while in the grip of intemperate habits. Then there is Major Roper, the incessant gossip, with the handicap of a poor memory; General Lund, "the ancient fossil," fighting his asthma and bronchitis, a long-suffering "fossil," but verily the salt of the earth; Kreutzkammer, always getting his friend into trouble, but as tonical as a whiff of the salt sea; Brownrigg, the inimitable bore, vending out his Grauboschian philosophy; and Tomes, his peer as a master of occult speech, both too equally centered in their ponderous systems to ever escape their verbalities and see what the world is doing—all these are characters so delightfully and humorously drawn that they will continue to be the treasure of the memory.

But the spirit of humor, when as strongly developed in a writer as in Mr. De Morgan, always brings up the question of literary sincerity. Illusion is one of the things which is absolutely necessary in a good work of fiction. The characters must move by their own inner laws, and any imposition of the author's personality upon them must perforce destroy their sense of detachment and illusion. William Dean Howells has found fault with the method of Thackeray because Thackeray is continually stopping the narrative to inject his own homilies on the recurring situations. Mr. Howells does not find this to be artistic, as it tends to withdraw interest from the characters and to attach it to the author. The apology for the method of Thackeray is that he, the author, is such an imposing personality that his preachments are of as much, if not of more, value than the portrayal of the characters. This apology has no value, for a work of art must be no hodge-podge. It must carry unity of impression, and anything which tends to make disparate its elements must be looked upon as a blemish. There must then be offered some other excuse for the plan of Thackeray. We must conceive that the best method of determining the fault or the virtue of his method is by the practical experience of the reader. Let him read the books and note whether there is any withdrawal of reality from the characters by the interpolation or comments. So certain are we that the chief thing of fiction is verisimilitude that we may place it as an indubitable principle that if anything lessens the hold of real life there must be some defect. We believe that Thackeray frequently destroys the sense of illusion, and that his characters sometimes move through a mist. But this is chiefly true of his minor works. "Vanity Fair," "The Newcomes," "Pendennis," and "Henry Esmond" are vital. The homilies seldom withdraw from the sense of reality.

There is a distinct literary gain in the sense of humor which brings with it a distinct danger. The spirit of humor may in a sense be called the spirit of divination. It manifests the finest sense of order, and notes the slightest deviation from it. It is therefore a safeguard from bombast as well as the commonplace. We expect to find Mr. De Morgan eminently sane, and we should have instinctively placed this to his credit had we not read a word of his works, if we had been assured on good authority that he had a fine sense of humor. But the temptation of humor runs in two lines—the failure to be impersonal, and the failure to be sincere; and these two are practically one. We believe that of all our great novelists George Meredith shows the least evidence of detachment. His personality is so great that it is always throwing a penumbra about his characters. His men and women always carry his trade mark, and when thrown out upon the counters of the world they are protected from any imitative infringement by the regality of his name. Mr. De Morgan has a preponderating sense of humor, and his temptation is to keep his characters surrounded with this halo of order. He is continually setting himself to rights with you. He thus avoids the incongruous and keeps clear of the melodramatic, unless he slipt into the latter bog when he wrote "An Affair of Dishonor." There is little sense of fear that you may fall into a trap where you may feel embarrassed. Neither do you have to apologize for any inadvertency in the author's manner of presentation. Thus far Mr. De Morgan has met with your approval. But as an artist, Mr. De Morgan is at times likely to be self-conscious. He seems to be unconscionably long in introducing his characters and preparing them for the stage. This must not be taken as contradictory to a preceding statement that Mr. De Morgan begins his books with a running start. He is like a sprinter who, not knowing the fleetness of his adversary, has learned to leap at the report of the pistol, but who falls back into a dog-trot when he finds that he is not pushed in the race. But these great delays make us think that the author has not outgrown the desire to pose at least a little. Not quite so much as the maid before her mirror before she goes to meet the bridegroom, but a good deal more than the man who bolts his meal, grabs his hat, and is off for a day of honest toil. Mr. De Morgan has some amazingly fine features, and he has not quite escaped the frailty of the race to do a little quiet strutting. He does the things as modestly as any man who does it at all. His shoulders are never squared out, as in the case of Victor Hugo, but we think that we can see it in the obsession which he seems to have for the delicately humorous. Just how difficult it is to combine the highest sense of humor with the deepest sense of sincerity, may be found by comparing one of the novels of Mr. De Morgan with one of Tolstoi's. Tolstoi is a prophet. He could be no dilletante. There is something of the wild-eyed about him. He does not write to please. A demon has gotten into his blood and whips him on. He writes like a man charging through the smoke of battle to swing with cutlass or jab with pike the unknown enemy. He writes for peace with a greater fury than any other man we know of can write for war. Mr. De Morgan gives us a literary production, while Tolstoi gives us a segment of raw life. Mr. De Morgan seems to say, "These are my friends; laugh or cry with them as you think best." Tolstoi says, "These men are out of hell, and will get back to hell pretty quick unless you help." We never understand the meaning of sincerity until we put a purely literary man alongside a prophet.

The question may then arise: Is it possible for a man to have a high sense of humor and yet express a deep sincerity? Are the two qualities antipodal? It would be a source of discomfort to think that the quality which is best adapted to keep the world in good cheer may not be used in the most sincere literature, and so we seek the author who has been able to keep the finest sense of humor with the spirit of reality and earnestness. We believe that George Eliot has found a method of getting the finest humor and the deepest sincerity together. Her method differs from that of Mr. De Morgan in that she maintains simply the position of the chronicler, the one who puts connective tissue between events, and permits the characters to speak for themselves. She avoids the persiflage, the light chaff, which are the temptations of the man with the abounding sense of humor, and keeps these qualities restricted to the characters who can use these devices by virtue of their own gifts. We do not feel that George Eliot is tampering with her creations. They are never suborned by her. They may lack the sharp angularities and the noticeable features of the characters of Dickens, or even of Mr. De Morgan, but they are more deeply personalized and vitalized. Her humor fits in with real life. Mrs. Poyser is just as real as Dinah Morris. As we recall the characters now, after time has effaced some of the impressions of the immediate reading, she seems more real. This can hardly be said for the distinctly humorous characters of Mr. De Morgan. Brownrigg is one of the static gods which Mr. Chesterton speaks of. We shall laugh at him as we laugh at the Calathumpian with his face queered out of all normal resemblance to man. This criticism may be made of all the humorous creations of Mr. De Morgan. We can not recall any distinctly humorous character which seems to us to have reality. They are all static, they are all Dickensian. There are humorous situations in the life of Christopher Vance, Alice, and Sallie, but the characters are not of the kind which provoke a smile always on their entrance. The most consistently humorous character which Mr. De Morgan has produced is himself. His comments are always facile and dipped in the spirit of fun. He brings with him the cap and bells. He has vitality, wisdom, a shrewd eye, a keen wit, a clinging vocabulary, and, as in the case of Thackeray, many prefer him as the leading character of the book.

Humor always has a close relationship with pathos, and we expect that Mr. De Morgan will touch on the chords of sympathy in his characters. In this we are not disappointed. The heart-feeling is at times wonderfully fine. Joseph Vance is one of the noblest characters of all our recent fiction. We trace the life, with its growing burden, down to the end of the journey. A smile on the face and a spirit of diffidence peeping out of the eye were the masks which sought to hide the scars of disappointment. And when the end came, with the clouds somewhat lifted, it was also the end of life, with the sun shining but a few yards above the horizon. This book with all its humor is exceedingly sad. The character of Alice moving up through all the phases of childhood, until at last she stands beside Charles Heath, her protector, and by her sweet wifely ways drives all the gloom and despondency from his life, is a character so pathetic that it keeps the tears close to the eyes. The innate goodness of General Lund, his love for Rosalind and Sallie, his spirit of sacrifice, hold him to us, and make our pain the greater when we hear his deep asthmatic breathing and the hoarse bronchitis which shakes his frame. But we know not where to go to find any more touching scenes than those between Blind Jim and Lizarann—how he would not let his little girl know that he was a beggar; how she cried out, "Pilot," as he disappeared in the places where she was forbidden to go; how he tried to keep the knowledge from Lizarann when the accident came which crippled him for life; and how, most pathetic of all, when consumption had seized Lizarann, he, with fatherly care, would run his hand over the little dwindling legs; and how, when Lizarann was removed to another climate, their thoughts dwelt upon each other with the most loving care—this is a story which once read will not easily be effaced from the memory.

We can not be too grateful to Mr. De

Morgan for his optimistic outlook on life. He began to write at a time of life when most authors lay down their pens. He had seen life in all its phases. The illusions of youth had passed, and yet he did not come to his task disillusioned. There is no pessimism in Mr. De Morgan. He had lived long enough to see that pessimism was a poor philosophy. He does not talk of the vanity of life, but of the fullness of life. When he makes Dr. Thorpe speculate on death in that wonderful chapter in "Joseph Vance," he sees the sunlight gild the tomb. He does not talk of age with any sense of despondency. We do not like to call him an old man, and would not do so were we ignorant of the calendar. He keeps the spirit of youth with the wisdom of age. We can not find in him the slightest trace of morbidity. He does not affect a boldness in view of death, as Robert Louis Stevenson does in his interesting essay, "Aes Triplex." We feel that there is a touch of the morbid in Stevenson when he clamors the loudest that it is better that life go "foaming in full body over a precipice than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas." We feel at times that he is talking to keep up his courage. But this spirit of doubt and fear is not found in

Mr. De Morgan. What Tennyson wrote under the long title, "The Supposed Confessions of a Second-rate Sensitive Mind Not in Unity with Itself," could never by any stretch of imagination be applied to Mr. De Morgan.

Mr. De Morgan is not fatalistic. He believes that men can fight against their evil star and come out winners at the end. We do not mean that he shuns a tragedy. He is too much a realist to evade the results of sin, and he does not hesitate to place in the most lurid light the tragic outcome and ruin of characters which have wheeled off their moral orbits. But Mr. De Morgan believes in a second chance. Life needs not degenerate if a man will oppose his will, get a vision, and climb. Zola would doom Joseph Vance to ultimate failure, and make his pronouncements in the name of realism. Thomas Hardy would scarcely let him escape to the upper air, when the earliest environment gave him such a dungeon. But Mr. De Morgan permits Joseph Vance to creep until he can walk, walk until he can run, run until he at last plants his feet upon the summits, where he unconsciously wears a crown of character, which makes us give him a becoming deference. Christopher Vance does not quite gain the victory, for his habit of drink clings to him, but we love him as we love the man who has tried and failed, failed in the way we wanted him to win, but who has won in the ways that we had not anticipated. Charles Heath needed a second chance, his married life had been a failure, and he was a good subject for a tragedy, but his sister Peggy was an adroit, winsome woman, who knew how to lend a hand, and Alice, who had broken the cast of her early bad environment, had become so needful to his happiness that they managed to break off all negotiations with any impending fate, and so the story closed happily, as most stories should, with marriage and love at the fire-place. A fair prognostication from the opening chapters in "Somehow Good," would insist that there was ample ground for some fearful crisis in the end. But we are gladly disappointed, for the tides of regeneration are set in the story, and when the end has come the characters have gotten out in the sunlight with a full day of bliss before them.

There is another peculiarity about the relation which the author sustains to his characters. He tries as a parent to preserve the reputations of all his offspring. Mr. De Morgan seems to say, These are all my children. Some are good and some are seemingly bad, but we shall not talk against them, for they are all members of the family. Professor Phelps has said that the old women in Mr. De Morgan's novels are disgustingly unattractive, and then asks the question, "Does his sympathy with life desert him here?" We believe that the question is to be answered in the negative. His sympathy does not desert him with either the young or the old. I consider that the most provoking character of all his creations is Judith, and the biggest fool is Lucinda; and yet how Mr. De Morgan is continually excusing Judith and is trying to get sympathy for Lucinda. This is not a frequent thing in fiction, namely a realistic writer, who gets all manner of life before you, the drunkard, the debauchee, the trickster, the adventuress, the fool, the profane woman, the suicide, and then, like the blameless King Arthur, will not speak a word of slander against them, no, nor listen to it. His sympathy is so great that you rise from the reading of all his books with a greater respect for men in all their failings, as well as in all their virtues. And you have not suffered moral debilitation, as one might suppose, because of this attitude of Mr. De Morgan.

Mr. De Morgan is a man of faith. We do not know where to classify him in the Church life. We do not know that he accepts what we may think to be the essentials of our creed, but we are assured that in his books he has placed the essence of life. We can not read "Joseph Vance" without the conviction that the author believes in immortality. It is in this same book that we have the interesting passage on Christ and Positivism. Joe is speaking of his father-in-law.

"He had found consolation among Positivists many years before, and had committed himself so often to the sufficiency of Comte to a well-regulated mind, during a period of happy exemption from home thrusts of Death, that he could not well surrender at discretion because he was hard-hit in his first general engagement. He was (if a person who has not gone much into these matters may venture on an explanation) an example of a Christian who had endeavored to strain off the teachings of Jesus the Nazarene from the scum and the dregs of the world and the Churches, and had never been able to decide on the mesh of the strainer. He and I and Janey had often talked vaguely on the subject, and he always seemed to me to be endeavoring to find a seive that would let Christ through and keep the miracles out. Do what he would, the resurrection slipped past. The stone that was rolled away from the sepulchre broke a hole in the mesh, and the Gadarene swine found it out and came through with a rush; and then a new seive had to be provided and the whole operation repeated. There was one thing clear, that due account had to be taken of what the laws of nature would permit. And though Mr. Spencer did not include them in his own legal acquisitions, it was very well known that they were pretty well known in Albemarle Street. But personal application, so to speak, for a reference to an original Codex of Nature having led to no production of an attested copy, poor Mr. Spencer was thrown back on choosing between the interpretation of the Churches (or rather an interpretation of some Church) and pure Negation, unless some form of compromise could be effected."

But the great message of Mr. De Morgan is the duty and the beauty of love. All his books are full of this divine element. It is not the passionate love of youth, but the affection which grows fuller with the years, and seems by its very might to be the most certain earnest of our immortality.

"All 's to come right in the end, Joe, be sure of that. . . . I mean when I say 'all 's to come right in the end,' that it will do so in some sense absolutely inconceivable by us—so inconceivable that the simple words I use to express it may then have ceased to mean anything, or anything worth recording, to our expanded senses. To a mind that conceives this degree of inconceivability, it seems merely common sense and common prudence to leave it all to God's hands."

"But," said I, "there must be some residium of the rubbish of our thoughts and perceptions that will hold good throughout for this state and the next. There must be a golden bead at the bottom of the crucible."

"Of course there is," said the Doctor. "Love is the golden bead at the bottom of the crucible. But love is n't thought, or perception, or even passion, in the ordinary sense. It 's God knows what! I give it up. But it 's a breath of fresh air from the highest heaven, brought somehow into the stuffy cellar of our existence. It 's the flash of light that strikes on the wall of the tunnel our train is passing through, and shows us the burst of sunshine that is coming."

And then these sweet words in "Alice For Short:"

"All was not vanity, preach whoso might! So long as Love itself—the mystery of all mysteries—shall remain unsolved, there is an immeasurable music beyond the octave-stretch forlorn of our fingers, an unfathomable ocean beyond our little world of pebbles on the shore."

The Paradox in the Life and Writings of Tolstoi

TOLSTOI was in some respects the ablest and most convincing writer of his generation. But his name yields itself to strange speculations as to the period of life which is the most notable. What seems to constitute his surest hold upon posterity, he repudiated as nil. In his late days literature was to Tolstoi but a plaything, hardly good for a man in the strength of his days, and not to be considered when a man had come to his fourscore years. And so it came to pass that Tolstoi refused to recommend the reading of his books upon which his fame must rest. He considered them only evil, and became intent upon that which he deemed to be a greater thing, namely, living.

It is no uncommon thing to find genius afflicted with some strange strabismus, and the reason is not far to seek. One of the essential things of the highest genius is modesty. An immense power of receptiveness sets apart the genius from the ordinary man, and it is rarely found that this receptiveness can run *pari passu* with conceit and self-consciousness. It is therefore frequently noted that the genius gets a distorted view of his own work. Milton writes "Paradise Lost," and then prepares himself for what he conceives to be his *magnus opus*, "Paradise Regained." Kipling throws the "Recessional" into the waste-basket. Tennyson when not busy with his great work of making literature, tosses off "Crossing the Bar." Swinburne writes almost the most musical of our language, but his essays provoke laughter from the critical storm centers. Tolstoi has written books with such deftness, imaginative insight, and tremendous earnestness, that the world long ago placed them among the treasures which are to be kept against the day of reckoning. But Tolstoi lost his regard for them. They reminded him of his days of torture, and he wished to shield himself from the peering ghosts of the past. He thought that he had come to his great work in his later days. He became a preacher of simplicity. With his humble garb, his simple food, his peasant life, he thought that he had gotten back to nature. Thirty years before he had contemplated suicide. He had gone to Confucius, Buddha, Solomon, the Greek philosophers, but came away disillusioned. The mystery of life appalled him, and he was ready to cast it off. Then he opened the Gospels and found life. Christ and His words brought salvation. He became a follower of Christ in a unique way. He took His teachings for the complete truth, sought no compromise with the harder things, trimmed no sentences because they seemed to declare unrealizable ideals. He gave up his wealth, put away luxurious living, donned the garb of a peasant, called all men his friends, accepted the ideas of non-resistance, fought against the clamor for patriotism, became a potent voice against war and intemperance. He cared nothing for conventional theology, and thought that the Church was wholly evil. He ran the shears through his Bible, cut out Paul, and called him a theologian whose counsel darkened the words of his Master. In the domain of the czar, his voice was untamable. No decree could blanket it. He exposed the injustice of his day with such audacity that the world began to feel that there was a mighty voice in Russia, like the voice of one crying in the wilderness, demanding preparation for the coming of great things.

In attempting to make an estimate of Tolstoi, we find ourselves dealing with paradoxes at almost every turn. With what seems practically two men to consider, we are to call them both Tolstoi. With two divisions of life almost antipodal in their tendencies, we have difficulty in finding unity. If we ask the question, Which part of his life seems to be the greater? the answer is like the swing of the pendulum. The literary expert says, Here is the supreme man, and the moralist says, Here is the supreme man. Is Tolstoi a Christian? And the answer is Yes and No. Conventional religion says No, for he strikes his mace against their creeds. Vital religion says Yes, for he counts life greater than formulas. Does Tolstoi live a practical life? and the world says No, and the Churches are in doubt. But the history of Tolstoi has been written, and that history declares that he managed to live and upset the dogmatism of the world and the doubts of the Churches, and so lived that he found joy and a settled peace.

But with perplexing questions like those before us, we shall for a while shift to a ground in which there is no doubt, and that is his place in literature. Here he lives and has a name which will not be thrown out with the ringing of the curfew. His literary greatness may be caught from several angles.

In the first place, his books are translatable. There are some books which can never get out of their habitat. They are insular, imbedded in a language, and when an attempt is made to get them removed to some other language, their powers fade away like the fairy gifts of the old romance. Such books are those in which the feeling for language and rythm is of the highest æsthetic turn. Some words are daintily brought up. They live in kings' palaces, and are daintily clothed. But the law of the land forbids their journeying. Keats and Tennyson and Rossetti, in a great part, are indigenous, and if they are to be worthily enjoyed, it can be only by those who have courted the language with unusual diligence and devotion. They have attempted a marriage of the message with music, and have succeeded so well that to sunder them by translation is to rob them of their harmony. Such men may be great among their kin. They may be among the greatest poets of their language, but they lack that one thing that is necessary to make them cosmopolitans. They are great within narrow precincts, but in dealing with dainty faceted words they have gone into the inner sanctuary, where the rabble can not follow. They are high priests to the few, but their voice carries the sound of mummery to the crowd.

But Tolstoi in his translations carries force. He deals so much in externalities—things which men can see, hear, and know—that the common words can carry the message. May we say that the most sincere speech is the most translatable? The Bible is capable of transmission in the languages of the earth. The message which is real must be addressed to men, and must put on the language understandable by the common man. Therefore the prophet or reformer is born a world citizen. Tolstoi is a conscious and an unconscious reformer. He is more intent upon his message than upon its clothes; and it so happens that his voice, which was intended simply for the Russian peoples, has carried so much of adaptive qualities to the needs of the world, that his thoughts have overrun the limits of his native land and have become the possessions of all lands.

A second element of Tolstoi's literary greatness is shown in his earnestness. The time is past when a man may hope to win literary greatness through the simple use of his imagination. Life and thought must go hand in hand. Tolstoi is tremendously in earnest. He is no dealer in conventional phrases. No diletantism is observable. Read almost any other writer of the day after reading Tolstoi, and the sense of artificiality is apparent. Tolstoi's fiction is vivisection. It shows a surgeon's knife going down through gristle, muscles, quivering flesh, showing veins and arteries—ofttimes a gruesome performance, but, beyond doubt, a veritable performance. Tolstoi knows life, and his instinct for the vital is instantaneous. He speaks what he knows, and testifies what he has seen, and nobody calls in question his testimony.

It is not always necessary to suppose that earnestness must ally itself alone with the school of realism in literature. The romancer should know life as well as the realist. But the spirit of the realist naturally allies itself with the spirit of earnestness. Tolstoi is a realist—the greatest of the world of his day. His stories pulsate with life, red corpuscled life. He was in the Siege of Sebastopol. What he saw he could never forget. What he wrote afterwards of war was the indubitable note of truth. His great work, "War and Peace," is an epic written in heart-blood. "Sebastopol" is so vivid that the memory will not relinquish its grip upon its pictures. "Anna Karenina" is relentlessly true to life—a story of degeneration, pitilessly cruel in its telling, and yet as true to the orbit of life as the stars which swing in their courses. "The Resurrection" is a story of modern Russia which no technical historian will ever equal in truth and vividness. We are pained beyond measure at the awfulness of the picture, and resolve never to torture ourselves with a re-reading; but once set the task, and we must finish. A course of Tolstoi might be recommended as a good antidote for much of the promiscuous reading of the day. Our present writers are versatile. The common delinquencies of grammar, which Poe fulmined against in his day, are not searched for any more. English has become a web of gold in the hands of a score of the writers of the day. But one page of their scintillating, elfish English laid alongside the quivering flesh of Tolstoi's, and the instinct points out the master. Earnestness with a hammer is better than artistic diletantism shooting golden arrows at the moon. When you read Tolstoi, you say: "This is a man's life. I feel the ooze of blood. I see a race clothed in its shame and its brutality. Men are like the beasts of the stall, or, rather, the animals of the jungle. Their eyes are yellow, they have grown fangs, and their smile is as appalling as a death-mask. No man has felt the horror of life as has Tolstoi; and with his mind upon such grewsome things, we do not wonder that he sought release from life through contemplated suicide. There was not enough relief. The sun was crowded out of the sky, and the fields and the woods were stripped of their greenery. A dim, gray horizon, which held a myriad of beasts called men, and who were oppressed beyond endurance, and this was Tolstoi's Russia."

A third quality of Tolstoi's literary greatness is shown in the power of his imagination. It must be put down as one of the greatest in the realm of letters. The function of imagining is frequently assigned to the romancer's art, while the realist is supposed to get along the best he can without its use. But the art of the realist requires, if anything, the finer and the more comprehensive imagination than the art of the romancer. The romancer at times gives his imagination wings and it soars into uninhabitable lands. But the realist must keep his imagination within bounds, for there is always the touch-stone of life to condemn all careless work. The imagination of the realist does not fly so much as it threads narrow paths fronting precipices. It is always easier to tell an incident than to record life; and life can not be amply recorded save by one of great experience and of powerful imagination. Tolstoi's imagination is of the highest type. His groupings of vital things, his compassing vision, his marvelous detail, his unerring composition of all things which go to make up a vivid picture, are so impressive that but a casual glance is necessary to know that Tolstoi's wings are of the amplest dimensions.

But when we turn away from Tolstoi as a literary artist and consider him as a moralist, then we are in amazement. Here is one of the supreme literary geniuses of the world, who denounces all his former literary aspirations, looks upon his masterpieces with sorrow, and has become a noisy moralist. The change is so great, the atrophy of powers seems so pronounced, that our tongue fits itself easily to ridicule. And when we consider what sentiments he holds, and that he considers these sentiments to be all-important, then our amazement grows. For instance, Tolstoi accepts the doctrine of non-resistance. The words of the Master are absolute to him. He will not resist evil. He believes that when one cheek has been smitten, the other must be given, not in any figurative, but in a real way. War is never justifiable. Patriotism is a child of the devil. Men must be cosmopolitans. He believes in brotherhood, but not in that strained sense with which our modern civilization eases its conscience—that is, by doing a man no injury. Nor does he believe in that refined brotherhood which renders treatment in accord with birth, or social and intellectual standing. Tolstoi and the serf are brothers. They are to eat of the same oaten bread and drink from the same wooden bowl. Intellectual and social standing are not to be considered. All men should live this simple life. It is the only true satisfaction which one can find. And so in accord with his own interpretation of simplicity, Tolstoi puts on his simple garb, eats his homely fare, disdains all money transactions, refuses to deal with his own copyrights, and shows kindness and charity to the poor.

A life like Tolstoi's gives itself over to strange speculations. He fits himself to paradox with alacrity. Greatness and littleness seem strangely combined. Literary merit and poor literary judgment run cheek by jowl. A profound view of life with a shallow philosophy of life are apparent. A tremendous sense of details goes with an utter lack of fine discrimination. A realism that is profoundly true runs hand in hand with the baldest idealism. Let us briefly discuss some of these idiosyncrasies.

Tolstoi's idea of simplicity is, that of stripping life of all unnecessary things, in food, in raiment, in honor, and of finding the homely, essential things. To this idea, Tolstoi has made a complete immolation of himself. It is the current view of simplicity, but it is doubtful if it will be well received by the man who has much historical data at hand and who keeps his philosophical instincts at play. What we usually term simplicity is but an artificial product of the century, standing over as a revolt against excesses, but hardly comprehensive enough as a rule for our present-day living. Living on bread and water and wearing a humble garb have an air of simplicity, and look much like poverty. But the question arises, "Is it necessary to conceive that these things are essential to the happiest and the fullest life?" Is money-making sinful? Or, rather, is it too complex a business to be classified under the term simplicity? Does simplicity mean the reduction of life to its lowest terms, the abstention from all occupation, save some genial work like tending the soil and bringing forth crops? This seems simple enough, but is it large enough? "Plain living and high thinking" is a current expression which is the passport into many of the camps of the simple livers; but is it not more of a phrase to conjure with than to live by? Tolstoi has the most naïve idea of simplicity. He has not rationalized the term and then permitted his life to run out in its many channels. He has defined the term with dictionary exactness, and then has done the marvelous thing of illustrating his half view with his life. Walt Whitman, with his barbaric yawp, has another view of the simple life which is quite opposed to Tolstoi's view. Tolstoi makes a mixture of high moral principles with scarcity of food and of raiment and of business, and calls the compound simplicity. Whitman reverses the relative amount of the ingredients, and his prescription would run like this: A minimum amount of ethical principles, a capacious stomach, and a good, carnivorous scent, which will take you to all prey. Now, if the simple life is the old-time life with the breath of ages on it, then Whitman's omnivorousness captures the prize. But Robert Browning was essentially one of our healthiest men. The smell of morbidity was as exempt from his garments as the tincture of sin, and Browning's idea of life was very complex. He never talked about the simple life. He lived life on its heights, and permitted no phrase to take him captive. He learned the lesson of life from a great Jew, who taught that all things are yours. And it must be confessed that life, with doors and windows open, catches more light than that which filters through key-holes, and that forever roaming with a hungry heart is better sport than eating rye bread and wearing tunics, like a prophet.

What is the truth which lies in Tolstoi's doctrine of non-resistance? and the spontaneous answer is, "It is the command of Christ." Tolstoi does not go beyond his Master. Did Christ say it? When assured of that fact, Tolstoi never questions farther. Christ is, was, and always will be right, and Tolstoi is like a courier with bowed head before his Lord, waiting His commands to run and tell the tidings to the people. What will he do if the world is perverse and wreaks personal vengeance upon him? Nothing at all. If he be smitten on the one cheek, what then? There will be another cheek to be presented. He considers that vengeance and retaliation are his rights. God must look after such things. Tolstoi entrenches himself behind the words of Christ, and will not be dislodged. The skepticism of the day does not touch him. The finer-spun Christian theories which try to make principles rational to an Occidental mind, he is not interested in. He draws no distinction between an Eastern and a Western mind. He makes no allowance for the growing complexity of our civilization, and what we think is the need of the figurative interpretation of some things. To him, Christ is not so much idealist as realist, and Christ is not dreaming so much of what the world will be in the future as to what it ought to be now. If we declare that with the adherence to this principle the sense of justice would vanish, and that men must be taught to do right even though they are punished to this end, then Tolstoi will simply turn a deaf ear to our statement. We assert that Christ Himself drove out the money-changers and used violence in cleansing the house of God, but Tolstoi has no synthetic Christian philosophy. He states that Christ might do this, but that we may not. We finally become exasperated, and call him obtuse and stubborn, but he simply smiles and lives the simple life.

Then there is a literary problem which

must be put to Tolstoi. "War and Peace," "Sebastopol," "Karenina," "Resurrection"—all these are great books written by a supreme master. They are messages of tremendous import, not didactic, but expressed in a much superior way. They are among the great moving forces of the century, and have been slowly awakening Russia, until she is now shaking off her lethargy, and is asking the important question, "How can these things be?" Now over against these great productions and almost as a foil to show off their greatness, we have his fugitive skits on patriotism, religion, simplicity; we have his tirades on liquor, war, Shakespeare. He has assumed the rôle of moral dictator, and speaks with immense assertativeness. From the viewpoint of literature, his later works are valueless as compared with his former. From the viewpoint of usefulness, his pictures of horror are vastly greater than his screaming tirades on the complexity of civilization. How can the later writings be justified by Tolstoi? Must we not conceive that there has been a decadence of powers? Why did Tolstoi in his later days think of his great productions only with pain? Tolstoi was once an artist; he became a lay preacher. Why did he leave the larger field for the smaller? This question may be answered by some who insist that when a man's conscience is thoroughly aroused that he then becomes didactic, straightforward, vehement. That he is likely to conceive that all circumlocutory methods, like veiling morals in fiction, is a whisper from the abyss. He may hold that the only way to create sentiment is to thunder out convictions, deal in the logic of noise and fury, stamp with the foot, fling down a comminatory finger, shoot a blazing eyeball down its slant, and lay bare the audacity of the soul in Nathan's phrase, "Thou art the man." But must we not conceive that Tolstoi has erred in his convictions as to the best method by which to contribute his strength to the world? Is it not true that so far as starting whispers which will shake a throne is concerned, that the pessimistic, disillusioned Tolstoi, seeing life with horror, and writing with a stylus dipped in blood—the man who felt the burden of life so intolerably irksome that he contemplated a leap where beyond these voices he conceived peace to be—that this Tolstoi has been a prophet of ampler girth than "the didactic Tolstoi, with his trumpeting and tearing nonsense, screaming for an obscene purity, shouting for an inhuman peace, hacking up human life into small sins with a chopper, sneering at men, women, and children, out of respect for humanity, combining in one chaos of contradiction an unmannerly Puritan and an uncivilized prig until in our confusion we know not whither the great Tolstoi has vanished?"

But, after all, the scalpel and the dissecting knife are not the best instruments to get the value of a man. Our literary judgments catch him only at an angle. A bisection of life with one hemisphere thrown out to the dung-heap and another hemisphere billowed off into immortality, may be analytical, but not convincing in regard to Tolstoi. Life is constructive. It builds of all kinds of materials—gold, silver, wood, hay, and stubble. And the influence of life is the influence of a unit. We can not well partition off ourselves and let issue forth a dozen gorgons and angels of varying shades of malevolence and benevolence. And when we look at Tolstoi from the viewpoint of life, rather than from the viewpoint of technical literature, then we have a different story to tell. We see him now as a single man, with perhaps the strangest combination of characteristics of any of the men of his day, but with an inner unity which harmoniously binds together all things. Are we sorry that Tolstoi gave up princely living and became a peasant? Not at all. Are we sorry that he quit writing "Sebastopols" and "Kareninas" and took to political fulminations? We are satisfied with the change. Are we not aggrieved that the profoundest seer of life of our generation seemed so suddenly to go into eclipse and to become a noisy preacher, with a score of half truths for his iterated themes? We are willing to accept the change. We want no bisection of Tolstoi's life, and we would not change one iota of what has been written and what has been done. We should rather prefer to state that this entire life is a piece of web fashioned by the angels. We choose to say that this life instead of being anti-climatical—dribbling down from greatness to peevish littleness, is one grand ascension—a roulade of notes, starting with golden tones and infinite suggestions, shifting off into strange motets which bring heart-grippings and straining vision, and finally culminating in an orchestral crash, which for the time we know not whether it be music, but have no doubt that life has struck all chords, and are content to wait a moment until we can feel the ebbing of its power.

But how shall we justify ourselves in this assertion? And the answer is that life is greater than literature. To write is not so difficult nor so meritorious a task as to live. Tolstoi has tried to both write and live, and has succeeded; but his living has surpassed his writing. There may be more continued praise for his writings than for his life, but this only argues the feebleness of our instincts. The greatest thing in Tolstoi is the fact that he has lived the impossible life—the most idealistic life. We say that his idea of simplicity is too hard to ask men to follow, and forthwith Tolstoi illustrates his idea of simplicity by living it. We affirm that the doctrine of non-resistance is simply a dream; that nations would go to smash in a decade if they practiced it; that men must get on another planet to live according to its meaning; and then forthwith Tolstoi practices the impossible art, and not only lives it, but finds joy in so doing. We affirm that the Christian theory is good, but that it needs practical treatment. Some things should be planed smooth, Oriental imagination erased and interlined with Occidental practicality, a goodly sized company of higher critics employed who are to go fore and aft with microscope and scissors to inspect and fit and trim the system for the dimensions of a man—and then Tolstoi comes and fits his huge manhood snugly into the old crude system and is happy. We may view Tolstoi from many angles, and in the tones of a philosophical practitioner, we may say, "Thou ailest here and there," but Tolstoi has refused our medicine, and, despite our fears, has kept his cheeks rosy and his feet springy on the turf.

If we conclude that the cause of Christ is the paramount cause in the world, then the best illustration of its success that this generation has known is the later life of Tolstoi. Here was perhaps the greatest man in the world of his day, with the most acute vision of life, and he could live by the narrowest interpretation of Christ's words, and could find such uncommon satisfaction that he could exhort the world to taste and see. In this great example we have cause for rejoicing. The quest for the Holy Grail may not be for us within such narrow limits, but the greater man has seen the sacred treasures, "blood-red with beatings in it," and our hope in common Christianity has been immeasurably raised by what Tolstoi has fashioned his life unto. We may find fault with the segments, but when life has been sphered out, then we put our finger on our lips and are dumb. We are critics of small things, but hero worshipers when our vision has run from head to foot and we have taken in the dimensions of his manhood. Tolstoi has done for Christianity perhaps the most notable thing of our day—he being the greatest man, has lived the Christian life within its narrowest compass, and has found room to turn round in, to breathe, to be free, and to grow to be a giant. We read his credentials to the truth of Christianity as documents of the highest validity, and rejoice that this man whose feet so lately went into the valley where he met that shadow cloaked from head to foot, who holds the keys of all the creeds, that some thirty years before he put brain and heart and limb and life upon the sacrificial altar of Christ, and bore a song away.

Ruskin

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IT is sometimes a matter for fine discrimination as to what time a writer should engage the attention of the public with his books. A genius generally settles the question without any reference to the expectation of the needs of the public by letting his butterflies escape as soon as the cocoon can be rendered. The disadvantage of this quick delivery lies in the fact that some subsequent birth may take away the intellectual birthright of the oldest offspring, and the father is kept in a state of perpetual apology for the standing of his children. William De Morgan matures his powers late, and at a period of years which finds most literary men in their graves, produces fiction which at once places him among the leaders of our fiction writers. Ruskin gets his afflatus in his early teens, and thence on to the close of a long life, he keeps the public on a *qui vive* as to what is going to happen. With an output of more than twenty-five volumes, mostly of original research, the question arises, How much is valuable in the light of our present-day investigation? It is not alone the specialist with his *ex cathedra* statement who has been pulling the bricks out of this great structure; Ruskin himself has put on an *alter ego*, and with suicidal intent has turned the sword upon his former self. He is willing that much should die. He finds fault with the Modern Painters, because it is written in a narrow religious spirit, and with too much enthusiasm. He forms a great dislike for the elaborate system which prevailed in his earlier days, and seems to take delight in showing how immature he was.

Ruskin seems to change his convictions with each succeeding book, and has been called by more than one able critic absurdly mercurial. We seem to be looking through a kaleidoscope—beholding a most wonderful array of bright-colored and fantastic imagery and then a turn of the tube, and the spectacle is changed, only the colors are still there and the fascination is as great. But the question arises, Is there room in our literature for a literary panorama? We think of Ruskin as a great reformer, and we think rightly; but his failures at reform are always rising like ghostly exhalations to give us bewilderment. He preached the doctrine of naturalism in art and fiercely impaled the old masters for their ignorance of nature. Then he discovered that the old masters were the true representatives of the art he advocated. He preached the doctrine of Preraphaelism until the entire movement became moribund, and some painters with excellent promise lost their cunning as artists. He preached with the most evident gusto the intimate relation of the moral and religious spirit with art, and then became eloquently skeptical of the value of religion to art in any form. His pronouncements upon the great painters are as fluctuating as they are interesting. Turner, Bellini, Titian, Tintoret, Capaccio, and finally Giotto, each in turn fills the horizon. Ruskin was the great master of the superlative. The comparative method of declaring merit was too cheap a device. He was always on the search for the best. When confronted with the evidence of his own discrepancies, he felt no embarrassment. Some errors he acknowledged with a gracious courtesy, and permitted his reputation for consistency to take care of itself, while with some other discrepancies just as indubitable he was willing to break a lance with his critical detractor.

It is because of these vagaries that the superficial student of Ruskin has failed to get an adequate idea of the man and the writer. He is a shining mark for all the specialists. His body of doctrine has been ground between the upper and the nether mill-stones of the scientific elite, until the declaration has gone forth that he is not to be trusted. As an art critic he has been turned out of court. His political economy is considered naïve, and in the light of our scientific inquiry, unnecessary. The specialist is against him. And to make the matter worse, he has himself helped in the act of demolition. If all these things must go, what will remain for posterity to cherish?

The answer is in the language of an old and worthy writing, "Much, every way." It is possible for a man to be a great failure and a stupendous success—to be wrong in half his opinions and yet immortal. It is not that the world pays little attention to the substance and looks for the form, that Ruskin's fame may be called a good venture. The world cares much for substance, and all things considered, he who gives the largest body of enduring truth will have his name most cherished. But it is unwise to impale a few of the theories of Ruskin, and then to pronounce his requiescat. No man can turn to this great body of literature and dismiss it with a wave of the hand. There is enough substance for a half dozen reputations after all the waste has been drawn off. Wherein Ruskin sought to be scientific, and this was always his spirit, his theories have gone into the testing-pot with the theories of all other scientists; and it is a noteworthy observation that science has not been overly kind to any of the sons of men. With its seven-league boots it has hurried on beyond the workshops of many living investigators, and exceedingly fortunate has been that scientist who, though dead, his works yet speaketh. But things must get a start, and some one must spend a portion of his life in pioneering. It is not probable that the scientist will do a finished work. Life is short, while art and science are long; but the pioneer with his new, fresh half-vision may be the most moving and important force in the entire history of that art or science. Other men may claim his right, as Kipling has said:

"Well I know who'll take the credit—all the clever chaps that followed—
Came a dozen men together—never knew my desert fears;
Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted, used the water holes I'd hollowed.
They'll go back and do the talking. They'll be called the pioneers."

But one of the imperishable things of Ruskin is that he is out at the beginning of things. The dew is still on his world. The disillusionment which comes when a score of scholars have looked upon facts with lack-luster eyes, and have woven some termagant terminology into the threads of beauty, has not been felt. A new world of facts is for a new explorer, and blessed be the future if that explorer should happen to be a poet. Ruskin was a poet. He saw things with a clapping of hands and a shining face, and his voice grew deep-toned as an organ and as voluble as that of a child when he told of his new discovery. He made science poetic. It was not a wise thing to do, said the after savant. He sang its beauties like a psalmist. Science is matter-of-fact and not lyrical, said Professor Dryasdust. But Ruskin's book is still a wonder-book, looked into by inquiring souls, who ask where the fields and the flowers may be found? where are the paths that run to the mountains? how are the clouds balanced and baptized? when do they put on their serrate and fluffy fringes? what is the meaning of this heap of stones, thrown out in spires and turrets or sprung in arches? where are the painters, sculptors, poets, and fictionists? And if a man has some deep regard for the welfare of the race, he will still hear the eloquent voice of Ruskin speaking through "Time and Tide" and through "Fors."

The distinction between science and literature must always be insisted on when we strive to find what is of permanent value in Ruskin. The fictionist and the poet have better chances than the scientist to keep themselves in touch with posterity, for human nature is our most stable asset, and those who have caught its phases of emotion and thought are entitled to a longevity that he may hardly aspire to who has been dealing simply with the theories of things. It is in this respect that Ruskin, and in a smaller degree Carlyle, who in their day filled a large portion of the horizon, will be crowded into smaller portions of the sky, to make room for the newcomers who are to be recognized for similar or better work. But if the theories of Ruskin go to the discounting room, Ruskin himself will still stand forth as one of the magnificent figures of the nineteenth century. And there will always be this probability, that when the ferment of opinions has subsided, this great prophet will be counted among our greatest scientists. But we are now chiefly concerned with the things which we believe to be of permanent value.

Ruskin was a great poet. Some complaint has been made that he missed the greatness of his life's work by turning aside from the field of poetry. The indication of the finest imagination and deftest touch is found in his very early years. He was master of a fine phrase when only eighteen. This early poetry does not prove of much interest because of the morbid nature of the work. "A Scythian Banquet" and "The Scythian Guest" are appalling. His long poem, "The Broken Chain," is lacking in vitality. These are but the work of the prentice hand. The hand finally became steady, the imagination took fire, and the words trailed clouds of glory with them. And just when the poet was fully come, then the master laid down his pen. We do not hesitate to say that "A Walk in Chamouni" is one of the richest descriptive passages in our literature. There is a brooding spirit, a grace of language, a linked sweetness long drawn out, that remind one of Keats in his best mood. It will stand a favorable comparison with Coleridge's great "Hymn to Mount Blanc." One seems to find here

"Forms as of heaven, to guard the gate, and rear
Their burning arms afar—a boundless choir
Beneath the sacred shaft of many a mountain spire.

Countless as clouds, dome, prism, and pyramid
Pierced through the mist of morning scarce withdrawn,
Signing the gloom like beacon fires, half hid
By storm—part quenched in billows—or forbid
Their function by the fullness of the dawn:
And melting mists and threads of purple rain
Fretted the fair sky where the east was red,
Gliding like ghosts along the voiceless plain,
Like thoughts of loving hearts that haunt above the dead."

There is such a stateliness, melody, and grandeur about his short poem, "The Alps Seen from Marengo," that we make a complete quotation:

"The glory of a cloud without its wane;
The stillness of the earth—but not its gloom;
The loveliness of life—without its pain;
The peace—but not the hunger of the tomb!
Ye Pyramids of God! around whose bases
The sea foams noteless in his narrow cup;
And the unseen movements of the earth send up
A murmur which your lulling snow effaces
Like a deer's footsteps. Thrones imperishable!
About whose adamantine steps the breath
Of dying generations vanisheth,
Less cognizable than clouds; and dynasties,
Less glorious and more feeble than the array
Of your frail glaciers, unregarded rise,
Totter and vanish. In the uncounted day,
When earth shall tremble as the trump unwraps
Their sheets of slumber from the crumbling dead,

And the quick thirsty fire of judgment laps
The loud sea from the hollow of his bed—
Shall not your God spare you, to whom He gave
No share nor shadow of man's crime, or fate;
Nothing to render, nor to expiate;
Untainted with his life—untrusted with his grave?"

Those who have read his eloquent prose passage called "The Mountain Gloom," will read his poem "Written Among the Basses Alps," as another rendering of the sad condition of the inhabitants of such a region:

"Have you in heaven no hope—on earth no care—
No foe in hell—ye things of stye and stall,
That congregate like flies, and make the air
Rank with your fevered sloth—that hourly call
The sun which should your servant be, to bear
Dread witness on you, with uncounted wane
And unregarded rays, from peak to peak
Of piny-gnomoned mountain moved in vain?
Behold the very shadows that ye seek
For slumber, write along the wasted wall
Your condemnation. They forget not, they,
Their ordered function and determined fall
Nor useless perish. But *you* count your day
By sins, and write your difference from clay
In bonds you break and laws you disobey.
God! who hast given the rocks their fortitude,
The sap unto the forests, and their food
And vigor to the busy tenantry
Of happy soulless things that wait on Thee,
Hast Thou no blessing where Thou gav'st Thy blood?
Wilt Thou not make Thy fair creation whole?
Behold and visit this Thy vine for good—
Breathe in this human dust its living soul."

We believe that here are three poems which the world will refuse to let die.

Ruskin's works as a whole furnish the material for an autobiography which can hardly be equaled by that of any other writer of the nineteenth century. Good autobiographies are scarce—so scarce that it may be said that we have none. The formal autobiography is a farce in the sense of being what it asserts to be. The "Præterita" is a delightful book, but Ruskin is seen through it only as a ghost dimly. Newman's "Apologia" is one of the best of its kind, but is simply the explanation of a segment of Newman's life. The man is not there, only the working of the mental machinery as it changes its theories of belief. "Wilhelm Meister" is the classical work of the kind, but it requires several good biographies of Goethe to get the artificial coloring washed out of the picture and to turn the sun's slant full on the raw features. A man may think and then write down his thoughts, but a man can not live and grow and explain the processes of change. Confessional literature like Amiel's "Journal," is deeply interesting, and is good autobiography. But Amiel was not trying to write autobiography, and this makes all the difference. A man is caught and limned accurately in his unaware moments, when he is not posing for a picture, but is caught in his negligee moods. Self-consciousness is the bar sinister of good literature. Literature, to be good, must be free; and we are still waiting for the man with the introspective psychologic mind who can take himself as the subject of his own book and carefully keep the paint-brush from making decorations, or of unduly putting on a dun color through mock humility. The portrait painter has a hard task when he tries to portray his own features. He desires, it may be, to paint the merry expression, but it needs an earnest spirit to paint a face of levity, and if he poses before the mirror to report his own sitting, he has lost his subject before he has begun. A good autobiography can be found only by the biographer. It is the only kind of literature that the party of the first part can not write well. But Ruskin is an intensely personal writer. His books are full of the finest materials with which to trace the changes of his thought and habits. He is reticent on his domestic life, and we note that Collingwood, his best biographer, omits this tragedy in the life of Ruskin. But the thought life is before us in its infinitesimal changes, and this is the most important thing. When the student has finished reading Ruskin, he can never quite forget some of the qualities of the man. No formal biography or autobiography can show one tithe of his greatness and attractiveness. The biographer declares that Ruskin has changed his opinions; but this is a cold statement, and lacks that personal dramatic interest which comes when one gets into his brain and feels the tides of thought lift and fall to other things. One finds that he is the most unselfish of men, spending his fortune and dying poor, giving his service to the working man, teaching a night school for over a year, writing books on political economy, and when the discrepancy is pointed out between his theory of rent and his own personal holdings, immediately disposing of his property at a loss and giving away the remainder. And then we see him in his willfulness, sneering at Gladstone and Disraeli, and then rendering a public apology, tearing his own book to tatters, then putting the pieces back and praising his youthful offspring, running up and down the gamut of religious belief, talking like a Christian, and then like a heretic, and again like a Christian, picking out some of the great painters of the world for a critical holocaust, and then coming back to the place of burning to show regret and to breathe upon the ashes until the phœnix birds of fame rise and soar again in their wonted skies; full of an emotionality that is surcharged with a vitreous lightning, and then sitting down in quiet to tell us that the platitudinous Pope must be in the first roll-call of our chief English poets; lifting up his voice with a roll of liquid melody and an eloquence of language that our annals of prose may well nigh be searched in vain to find their equal, and then calmly praising the gray and bald prose of some third-class unimaginative writer. Boswell has written our best biography, but Samuel Johnson by no natural or acquired ability bulks as large as John Ruskin, and there are scattered throughout these many volumes of Ruskin's such material as to make the documents of the highest personal value.

The place of humor in Ruskin's writings needs to be found and commented upon. If we can get humor among the assets of Ruskin, we can learn how to run harmony through most of the seemingly discordant strains. The sense of humor is the most preservative salt that an author can sprinkle among his works. Find a discrepancy, and the answer is that there is a smile lurking in the premises that the terrible logician forgot to carry out in the conclusion of his syllogism. Logic always has a fair field and is a good combatant until he runs atilt with humor; but in this strange contest he has to spend his time in orienting himself so as to keep his face to the foe. The struggle is quite as unequal as that of a stately trireme rushing with plowing prow and thundering cannon upon the tantalizing and skipping biplane that makes its swallow-dips of attack and then soars off at an angle too aerial for lumbersome guns to reach. The humor of logic is a subject fit for much research and capable of much mirth, while the logic of humor is a subject equally interesting, but has meaning only as a man understands that in no fine sense is there any such thing as the logic of humor. If we can believe that Ruskin carried the sense of humor in his writings, then his friends have an easy way of getting his enemies on the hip. But the question arises, Where is the humor of Ruskin? And we must acknowledge that if Ruskin was humorous, it was of the elephantine kind. He never broke out into a guffaw of the Mark Twain or Artemus Ward kind of mirth. No one has conceived that behind his sentences there lay couchant that elusive pensive pain and joy that mildly effervesced into smiles, as in the case of Charles Lamb. He was not witty as Hugo, nor broadly human as Dickens. He had a little of the satire of Thackeray. But his nearest approach as a comrade in humor was Carlyle. They were two of a kind, who played with things much as bears play with their cubs. They batted their progeny around in what seemed a grewsome way to the timid-hearted bystander, and then they licked them with great red chops when the play was over. Some trainers have taught bears to dance, but the most interested spectator has been willing to acknowledge that in their best efforts they were not able to trip the light fantastic toe. Carlyle could mouth out his humor with a deep growl that sounded like an approaching storm, and Ruskin caught the trick, but pulled out a few more of the organ-stops of language to make the thunder keep up its reverberation a little longer. It is a humor so severe that it becomes awe-inspiring. It takes at times the thinnest blade of a dissecting-knife to find the cleavage between such humor and the most downright seriousness. And yet there is ample evidence to show that Ruskin is capable of emitting some Gargantuan gurgle. When the Lilliputians crowd about him to show his inconsistencies, how heavy laden with humor is Ruskin's explanation! So massive in argument that it gives the Lilliputians another item to fill out their data of defect. When asked to explain why he had passed his praise of Tintoret over to Titian as the man who was absolutely right, the answer was cryptically lugubrious. The ponderous German with his "objective" and "subjective" nonsense was grimly clubbed into innocuous desuetude by his own weapons in the hands of Ruskin. He gravely informed the people of "Fors" that his fort was not description, but political economy. His humor put on the Pharisaic mood of self-praise when he told Susie in "Hortus" that he was the only author on art who did his own work of illustration, and therefore the only one who had learned his business thoroughly. His savage advice to the young writer not to write until he was capable of doing the best that could be done by any one, is too anti-Ruskinian if not to be taken with a smile. He told what things he wanted to destroy until the heavy-going critic was horrified.

"Now, though I am an illiberal, there are many things I should like to destroy. I should like to destroy most of the railroads in England, and all the railroads in Wales. I should like to destroy and rebuild the house of Parliament, the National Gallery, and the east end of London; and to destroy without rebuilding, the new town of Edinburgh, the north suburb of Geneva, and the city of New York. Thus in many things I am the reverse of conservative; nay, there are some long-established things which I hope to see changed before I die; but I want still to keep the fields of England green, and her cheeks red; and that girls should be taught to curtsey, and boys to take their hats off when a professor or otherwise dignified person passes by; and that kings should keep their crowns on their heads, and bishops their croziers in their hands, and should duly recognize the significance of the crown and the use of the crook."

It is interesting to note how Ruskin settled the great question of free will:

"I find some of my friends greatly agitated in mind, for instance, about Responsibility, Free-will, and the like. I settled all those matters for myself before I was ten years old, by jumping up and down an awkward turn of four steps in my nursery-stairs, and considering whether it was likely that God knew whether I should jump only three or the whole four at a time. Having settled it in my mind that He knew quite well, though

I did n't, which I should do, and also whether I should fall or not in the course of the performance—though I was altogether responsible for taking care not to—I never troubled my head more on the matter from that day to this. But my friends keep buzzing and puzzling about it, as if they had to order the course of the world themselves, and won't attend to me for an instant, if I ask why little girls have large shoes."

He is at least picturesque, if not humorous, when he declares how some people read the Bible:

"The way in which common people read their Bibles is just like the way that the old monks thought hedge-hogs ate grapes. They rolled themselves, it was said, over and over, where the grapes lay on the ground. What fruit stuck to their spines, they carried off and ate. So your hedge-hoggy readers roll themselves over and over their Bibles, and declare that whatever sticks to their own spines is Scripture, and that nothing else is."

It is conceived by most writers that Ruskin is at his best as an expounder of the beauties of nature. In the realm of description or appreciation of nature, the critic in his most critical moods finds only a passing fault. One must go back to Wordsworth to find such an intense love for fields, forests, rivers, and mountains, as Ruskin has shown. And yet there is much ground for discrimination between these two great nature lovers. They were both naïve in their love, without the slightest trace of affectation. Nature for them was not intended to adorn a tale, furnish an illustration, or present some data for melodious declamation. Nature came as a silent, moving spirit of beauty that won their hearts with its gentle persuasion. They loved nature as a part of their life. Wordsworth spoke for both when he said:

> "I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hours
> Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Not harsh nor grating, but of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and the mind of man."

Wordsworth is pre-eminently our nature poet, our sanest medicinal singer of a nature which Tennyson sometimes in his moments of pain, cried out that it was red with ravine and shrieked against the creed. But Ruskin is the best expounder. He is a great teacher. He has the keenest eye to see, the most sensitive heart to feel, and the finest instinct to marshal things for systematic instruction. In this combination he is unique. The critical and the creative elements have been conceived as mutually destructive, and therefore not to be found combined in any author. The statement is not correct, for such men as Lowell and Matthew Arnold and Coleridge would creep in like a worm i' the bud to mar the generalization. But there are many illustrations to show that the deeply appreciative and enthusiastic natures have been too impressionistic and spontaneous to measure their likes and dislikes by any standard of excellence. Ruskin himself has expressed some strange judgments in regard to his favorite writers. The fact becomes obvious that the ecstatic vision can not easily precipitate itself into the pedagogue's rule of procedure. He who sees with the utmost joy can rarely do more than tell of his joy. Its explanation is hardly in his hands. But Ruskin is the profoundest teacher of the glories of the natural world that our race can boast of. He is the rare combination of scientist, poet, and teacher. No other man has ever taught the eye to see as he. It might be a subject worthy of some research, to trace how the fame of Wordsworth has grown since Ruskin gave to the world his pronouncements. Ruskin saw nature and saw it accurately. He was botanist, geologist, crystallographer, student of cloud forms, mountain ranges, with a knowledge of gems. With these he had great ability as a draughtsman, an instinct for color, a profound knowledge of painting, architecture, and sculpture. Despite all adverse criticism, he was by odds the most thoroughly equipped both by nature and by acquisition, to be our greatest teacher of the beauties of the natural world.

It is one of the strange things of criticism that Ruskin should have been faulted for the very thing which has made him most successful as an expounder of natural beauty, and that is his emotionality. He has been unfavorably contrasted with Goethe—his emotionality set over in a lurid light against the deep poise of the German. But this is surely missing the point. The question is not whether emotionality or constraint is the more admirable virtue—the contrast is absurd—but whether Ruskin fulfills his destiny as well through the use of emotionality as does Goethe who is able to hold all his power in calm restraint. We have remarked that Ruskin was by nature a teacher. It is as impossible that a man can make a good teacher without a high degree of enthusiasm and emotionality as it is impossible for a man to make a good sentinel for a sleeping army who keeps up an incessant clatter, inviting the enemy to come and see him do his duty. One requires enthusiasm, the other self-restraint and watchfulness. Goethe is calm and collected enough to be a sentinel to all the armies of the world, but his limitations as a teacher are marked. He may instruct the man who has already been taught and now wants some rubbing-down and polishing-off that he may not appear too obvious. Goethe's culture is the culture of calm. No one fights battles under his tutelage. Nothing is worth fighting for. The invitation is to set sail for the happy isles, become a lotus-eater, and let the big world armies clang with spears and shields, and fight out their little difference to exhaustion. Goethe fitted himself for a pagan millennium of peace. While the battle-smoke of the French Revolution drifted into his nostrils, he borrowed the peace of coming days, and became the apostle of the inert. Ruskin could not acquire the calm of an unruffled mountain lake that took into its mirror the drifting clouds and the march of the stars at night. He was as turbulent as a mountain stream that had destinies to fulfill from its tiniest runlet to where its gathered might of waters carried the laden ships to the heart of the sea. And it was because of this intense activity of soul that the eye of the world got fastened on Ruskin. He had something to say, and he said it with such a blowing of trumpets that the crowd ran down to hear the voice and to see the gesticulations. Ruskin was emotional—highly so—but he was a teacher, and that was his justification. He saw something that he wanted others to see. The pageant of the sky was too beautiful to be silent over. Its colors were richer than had been seen by any other eye, unless it was the eye of Turner. The forms of the clouds filled him with delight. He looked at the blossoms and the leaves, and caught their vagrant geometry, and then like an old prophet who carried a message to a wilderness, he lifted up his vioce and cried, Ho every one! Come and see! And it was because of the magnificent enthusiasm of the man that people came out to see. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that since Ruskin's voice was raised, there have been more nature-lovers abroad than ever before.

But Ruskin not only had the equipment

and the enthusiasm of the teacher, he had the larger ability, which will make him a permanent asset in our literature of catching the forms of beauty with such accuracy as to make his pictures unsurpassable. There seems to be a growing dislike in some quarters for a picturesque prose. Prose poetry must be sent to the discard; prose is simply the vehicle to carry instruction, but never emotion. Poetry is the only resort for the man who wants to cry or become unduly æsthetic. If this dictum prevails as the dictum of good taste, then Ruskin will always be looked upon as one of the greatest sinners. There is, however, this much to be said for this theory: if a man attempts the picturesque he is likely to become sophomoric, and if he attempts the emotional he is sure to make such an unwonted noise through the sputtering of his passions that the sons and daughters of the Philistines will surely rejoice. But Ruskin is not in the class of the failures, but in the class of the stupendous successes. He has justified the use of the richest and the most ornate prose in our language. We can better afford to lose some Turners and some Claudes than some of the marvelous pictures which his imaginative prose has painted; and what is to be remembered is that the colors are far more undying than those of the best of the painters. A man who does not carry a distinctively color memory, as does the painter, can read Ruskin's great description of his first approach to Venice, and carry the picture longer in the memory than he could from seeing the same scene painted by any of the masters. Take any one of the several majestic descriptions he has of the Campagna of Rome, and we who have not walked over that strange stretch of the grewsome and the beautiful, refuse to believe that any painter could place in our memory quite the lights and shades and especially the feelings which Ruskin has left. Men have gone about Europe, following the pilgrimages of "Childe Harold," but Ruskin's eye was finer than Byron's, his poetic sensibility to nature much greater, and his pictures have been so impressive that it has not required a pilgrimage to make them live. We believe that no one has ever seen the beauty of the water as Ruskin has done. The flowers, leaves, and grass have been so dutifully examined and loved that even the poets must learn from him. His description of the "Mountain Gloom" must remain as one of our finest descriptive passages, and his introduction to "The Crown of Wild Olives" must be taken as one of the most eloquent utterances in our language. His panegyrics on the mica flakes and the mosses are passages never to be forgotten. Ruskin may suffer loss with the advent of new faces and new names, for

> "The moving finger writes; and having writ,
> Moves on;"

but it is quite inconceivable that any number of years can efface the words that have brought men into the arcana of nature, and have opened their eyes to see glories which from the dawn of creation held up their lamps in vain, until John Ruskin went into the fields, and by the water courses, and up the steeps to mountain heights, and came back with shining face to put his books within our hands.

When we come to trace the influence which Ruskin had upon the religious and the moral elements of society we find him at his greatest power. Apart from any distinctively religious movement, like that of the Tractarian Movement or the great religious revivals, we believe that Ruskin was the greatest moral and religious force of the century. He came as a layman with an artist's message, but it was a message that was so fundamentally laid in the realms of religion and ethics that he at once became noted as the great preacher of his age. The name of Carlyle must forever be coupled with his in arousing the English-speaking people to see the moral values which must be found in the highest life and the highest civilization; but Carlyle's voice wavered on the religious tone far before Ruskin's began to fail. It may be really doubted whether Carlyle was a distinctively religious force in any other way than that which would arise from his advocacy of the great moral values. Ruskin's messages were many, but we shall trace only the ones of chief importance.

Ruskin declared that the love of nature was an indication of natural goodness of heart. He did not go so far as to say that this love always was to be found in moral persons, for the lives of Shelley and Byron would show against his creed. Neither did he say that the absence of a love for nature was indicative of moral defect, for a list of poets might be found whose works would dispute the statement. But he held that the love for nature gave a man such a justness of moral perception that with an equality of other things, nature's lover was nearest to God. As a corollary to this proposition, he stated that the greatest minds of the world were lovers of nature. The only notable exception he could find was Moliere, and even in this case he felt that the absence of such passages from the works of the great dramatist must not be taken as *prima facie* evidence that he was without the love for nature. This doctrine had been hinted at by Wordsworth, and in his own life had been manifested; but Ruskin pronounced it to be a truth of general validity. Ruskin's saturation of the Bible must have helped him to maintain this thought. Hebrew literature abounded in the highest nature poetry. The Psalms, which were among his favorite passages, were ever calling men to God through nature. The heavens were declaring His glory and the firmament His handiwork. When Ruskin first began to proclaim his doctrine, Darwin and Spencer had not given to the world their doctrine of the survival of the fittest; and, especially, John Stuart Mill had not made his terrible indictment against nature. These came as tremendous checks against the voice of the eloquent preacher, and it is probable that in his later life they had the power of modifying his enthusiasm and of causing him to turn to the questions of political economy. But he had taught the lesson, and his voice still spoke through his book, even after the book had been repudiated by the author. We rejoice that he taught the doctrine. Whatever truth there may be in the evolutionary hypothesis, it is equally true that it comes not as a despoiler of the beauty of nature. Whatever indictment Mill may make against the cosmos, the colors of the clouds and the flowers and the beauty of the day and night pageants are too alluring to turn our thoughts permanently to the dark creed. And then, however paradoxical it may seem, Ruskin's theory could find good illustrations in the very lives of the men whose doctrines seemed to be so fiercely antagonistic to his own. Darwin, Spencer, Mill, Huxley, and Tyndall knew much of the processes of nature. We can not say that they loved nature as Wordsworth or Ruskin loved it. As scientists, they saw that beauty had a bad ancestry, but still they could not but acknowledge that nature had so much attractiveness that they were willing to dedicate long lives to the study of it, not because they wanted to grope among unclean things, but because they delighted in the present power and beauty of the natural world. They refused to let their philosophy of things vitiate their love for things. And, what is to the point is, that all of these men had a natural goodness of heart. They looked upon nature from a different angle than that of Ruskin; but the result in both cases was that the study of nature seemed to bring about higher ethical qualities in the life. Ruskin could have said with Wordsworth:

> "My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky."

Mill could have said with Tennyson:

> "Nature, red in tooth and claw,
> With ravine shrieked against the creed."

Many to-day are taking up the large, robust faith of Browning, and can say:

> "I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke:
> I, a work of God's hand for that purpose received in my brain
> And pronounced on the rest of His handwork—returned Him again
> His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw
> I report, as a man may of God's work—all's love, yet all's law."

But Ruskin never wavered when he maintained that the highest art must be moral. He conceived that it was absolutely impossible for any artist to reach any high place who failed in moral perception. He laid great emphasis on truth in painting, and then taught that truth in its complete form must be connected with a state of morality. The essence of beauty was essentially moral. He utterly abhorred that doctrine of most of the French schools, which is expressed in the dictum, "Art for art's sake." He felt like Tennyson, who, when shown such a statement from a French writer, growled out, "That is the road to hell." In the maturity of his life, Ruskin said:

"I am sometimes accused of trying to make art too moral; yet, observe, I do not say in the least that in order to be a good painter you must be a good man; but I do say that in order to be a good natural painter there must be strong elements of good in the mind, however warped by other parts of the character. There are hundreds of other gifts of painting which are not all involved with moral conditions, but this one, the perception of nature, is never given but under certain moral conditions."

Ruskin held that it took the entire man, with the development of all his powers, to make the perfect artist, and so he made no curtsey to the French dictum, nor wavered when the so-called exceptions were flaunted in his face.

When we come to the great question of the relation of art to religion, the record begins with an enthusiastic religious teacher, whose pronouncements are perhaps the most heartening to the Church of any messages given during his century; then comes the lull, with the querulous tone; then the bitter accent; then the long years of heresy; and at last, the awakening to old things and old loves, the record opening and closing in the sunshine, but with the long shadows overhanging the meridian of life.

But the message of Ruskin is the message chiefly of "The Modern Painters," "The Stones of Venice," and "The Seven Lamps of Architecture." "It is not the love of fresco that we want, but the love of God:" This was the burden of his message. The best art must be religious. A man must believe more than he sees. His reach should exceed his grasp. The schools of art must rank in order of merit as they perceive the highest beauty.

"Angelico, intensely loving all spiritual beauty, will be of the highest rank; and Paul Veronese and Correggio, intensely loving physical and corporeal beauty, of the second rank; and Albert Durer, Rubens, and in general the northern artists, apparently insensible to beauty, and caring only for truth, whether shapely or not, of the third rank; and Teniers and Salvator, Caravaggio, and other such worshipers of the depraved, of no rank, or, as we have said before, of a certain order in the abyss"

He believed that the religious spirit was the only healthful spirit. He held that a belief in immortality was necessary before a man could conceive the loftiest subjects and treat them with the finest skill. He declared that in the early Christian school of painting where immortality was a firm belief, the elements of decay, danger, and grief in visible forms were always disregarded.

Ruskin's theme was art, but his message was moral and religious. He was a preacher set for a great work, and his voice was so eloquent that he caught the ear of the entire nation. His dogmatism was so pronounced that only the bravest dared him to open combat. He built and destroyed reputations with a flourish of his pen. Punch sent in a complaint:

"I paints and paints,
Hears no complaints,
  And sells before I'm dry;
Till savage Ruskin
Sticks his tusk in,
  And nobody will buy."

But dogmatism must pay the price. The growing soul must feel the recoil of its cocksureness, and especially when a soul is as sensitive as that of Ruskin. Some men can keep their doubts unexpressed until a better day shall come, but the candor of Ruskin was just as pronounced when the shadow fell over his life as in the day of his most buoyant faith. In middle life he looked back with regret upon his earlier religious utterances, and believed that they were conceived in too narrow a spirit. This is the period that most of the religious teachers would draw a veil over. "Sesame and Lilies" is one of the best known of his minor books, and the condescending and proud tone of the preface compares unfavorably with the sentiments of his earlier books. There is the same dogmatism, but it is the dogmatism of a man who has been disillusioned—not the sweet, courageous dogmatism of a man who comes to proclaim that there are unerring paths which run from earth to a far spiritual city. Ruskin's eyes grew dim in middle life, and he could not, with Alfred Tennyson, dream of the walls or the towers of Camelot, and the larger vision of thrones set in judgment and glory, which dawned upon his earlier manhood, had died away into a smutch darker and dimmer than that which time had made to fall upon some beloved sketch of Giotto. The pendulum had swung through the arc of deep conviction to the skirts of unbelief. His voice became peevish; his spirit febrile. He had lost his knighthood, and went forth to no more tournaments to joust for the cause of God. This was the great tragedy in the life of Ruskin. When life was young, he drew his sword to cancel wrong, and put the trumpet to his lips and called out, God; when life had rounded on to its meridian, he sheathed his sword and threw away his trumpet. The Church, which had ever leaned on his counsel, now felt that it had leaned upon a broken reed. Ruskin was in despair. He might have said:

> "I give the fight up; let there be an end,
> A privacy, an obscure nook for me.
> I want to be forgotten even by God."

If the life of Ruskin had closed at this period, from the standpoint of Christian philosophy, it would have been but a doubtful success. Many people conceive that the life of Ruskin closed with this great shadow hanging over his faith. But the record is a fairer one, and the end is one quite befitting the hopeful Christian knight of the earlier days. His activity among the working people brought about a change. On Christmas day, 1876, there came a crisis in his life. He had an attack of severe pain, which was followed by a dreamy condition. For a year or so prior to this time he had been watching for evidence of a future life. All at once the glory of the life to come flashed upon him, and he became supremely happy. His doubt and pessimism passed away. His life suddenly changed. In the year 1879 he wrote a series of articles on the Lord's Prayer at the request of a clergyman friend. A year or so later he wrote in the last volume of "Fors," these words:

"You can not but have noticed, any of you who read attentively, that 'Fors' has become much more distinctly Christian in its tone during the last two years; and those of you who know with any care my former works, must feel a yet more vivid contrast between the spirit in which the preface to 'The Crown of Wild Olives' was written, and that which I am now collating for you, the 'Mother Laws of the Trades of Venice.'"

And then there follows one of the most interesting chapters of autobiography that we know of. It is the story of how he discovered a fallacy which had underlain all his art teaching since 1858. He told how, in his earlier days, the enthusiasm for the religious principle in art had caused him to place Fra Angelico at the head of all painters. But when he went to Venice and became acquainted with the gigantic power of Titian and Tintoret, and discovered to his astonishment that there was "no religion whatever in any work of Titian's, and that Tintoret only occasionally forgot himself into religion," then all his theories fell to pieces, and with the fall of his theories there began the dissipation of his faith. For sixteen years he wandered in doubt, always harassed with the thought that worldly-minded men like Titian, Tintoret, Velasquez, Reynolds, Veronese, Gainsborough, and Turner—seven of the great giants of the world—should paint better than the religious painters. But in 1874 he found a light which cleared up the situation. He was permitted to mount a scaffold in Assisi, and to draw a portion of the great fresco of Giotto, "The Marriage of Poverty and Francis." He was amazed to find that in this early religious painter that there was a man much larger and stronger than Titian, and that all the so-called weaknesses of Giotto were merely absences of material sciences. He found himself quickly changing his opinions. The strength and beauty of the Christian life began to reassert itself, and he felt that he could call himself a Christian.

So in the latter years of the life of Ruskin he came back, not to the old faith quite, but to a trust in the old realities. He had swung around a large circle in his religious beliefs, but at last he returned home. The darkness of middle life had passed, and there was light at eventide. He wrote his prayers, and in the closing days of "Fors," he preached that men should confess Christ. He came to God before his day's work was done and found a peace that all through his life had evaded him. He said:

"Without ceasing to press the works of prudence even on infidelity, and expect deeds and thoughts of honor even from Mortality, I yet take henceforward happier, if not nobler, ground of appeal, and write as a Christian to Christians; that is to say, to persons who rejoice in the hope of a literal, personal, and eternal God. To all readers holding such faith I now appeal, urging them to confess Christ before men."

The Lost Art of Reading

Gerald Stanley Lee.

I HAVE often thought that people should talk more of Gerald Stanley Lee. I do not recall seeing any appreciation of his books exceeding the thumb sketch of a passing review. I confess to a strange attraction for this strange man with his strange books. I find myself turning the pages to read his whimsicalities, stretching myself out with his ennui, catching my breath with a sudden start at some incisive thrust, and tramping round my room, accelerated by some collocations of words which roll forth such sonorous music that they must be packed away in memory by some peripatetic activity. But it must be stated that this book, "The Lost Art of Reading," is not one that carries an inviting aspect to the man who comes to the study of literature with a profoundly didactic and unbending mind. To such a mind the book puts up an averting hand and seems to say, "If you can not believe that civilization has already gone stark mad and that the world is going to smash; if you can not believe that the devils of custom, hurry, and fear have gotten us by the ears and are dangling us all over the abyss; if you do not believe that a smile is bigger than a hammer to break through a crusted formula, or that a wink over the shoulder is more martial than a pike-thrust—then you have no need for this book." Mr. Lee has not made a bid for the man who is wholly mathematical; the man with the theological temperament will pass by on the other side; the man with a system will call him an iconoclast; the formalist will glance at him as though he were some *rara avis*; the pessimist will find him destructive enough, but not solemn enough; while the optimist will throw him overboard with less concern than it requires to wink an eyelid. It is evident that Mr. Lee has bid only for a small clientele—the few men who are willing to be led far afield, through vague Emersonian lands, even down by some dim lake of Auber, if for no other purpose than to hear some faint, weird music, or some solemn-toned chimes which may seem to fall from some distant cathedral. He would indeed be more than a courageous man who could follow Mr. Lee and reverently say "Amen" to all his oracles. He is as vague as the Delphian oracle. You may go East or you may go West, and it is likely to turn out that in either case you will go wrong. A man has always a vague fear that whether he follows Mr. Lee to the letter, or whether he gives him a good, sharp discount, and then follows the discounted direction, that Mr. Lee is always smiling at him in a skeptical, Mephistophelian way. If Mr. Lee should write a piece of fiction, it would never get beyond the book-seller's stall. If he should write a poem, the result would be the same. But he has written a book on reading, which is only incidentally on reading, and what are we to think of it?

Mr. Lee's book is whimsical—that is the expression that defines it best. What are we then to think of a book which is whimsical? If it were "Alice in Wonderland" or Edward Lear's "Nonsense Verses," we should have a place for it at once. But this book is whimsical in another realm. It is a book for men, and as full of strange upsetments as "Alice in Wonderland." The author has achieved the honor of writing a book for grown up children which is warranted to keep their brains as slippery as a child's in reading "Helen's Babies." What are we to think of the exploit? Is this book a sort of an allegory, in which the author, with a smile upon his face and a jaunty air, is trying to show the horrors of our civilization and to point out the path which ends at some paradise where men may be uncivilized and happy?

When we think of the whimsicality of Mr. Lee, we find that we are also thinking of the term satire. We are somewhat in doubt whether we have not used the wrong term to characterize his work. We are sure that behind this cryptic utterance there is the face of a reformer. A bludgeon is concealed somewhere under these heaped-up garments of speech. It may turn out to be a transcendental bludgeon, borrowed from the arsenal of Mr. Emerson, and may do little damage. It may be that only a little damage is intended to be done. If we can decide the scope of the author's purpose, we can more definitely determine whether he is whimsical or satirical. When we become better acquainted with Mr. Lee and catch his expansive smile and his happy-go-lucky look, then we have little trouble in getting his work classified. Mr. Lee is quite different from our chief satirists, Swift, Pope, and Thackeray. The satirist has had a long line of literary victories to his credit, while the whimsical writer is so far an adventurer on uncharted seas that up to the present time we have no substantive in our language to take up his cause. The fact that the terms whimsical and capricious are synonyms, conjoined with the fact that the capricious writer has no standing with us, has made us practice economy in the exploitation of a new word.

But there should be a word spoken for the whimsical. It seems more lawless than the satirical. It lacks poise and logic and system. It is an intruder in philosophy. It carries too jaunty an air and cuts too many curvets to ever get classified with the dignified arts of expression. It is true that in creative literature, Rabelais and Shakespeare and Cervantes have given rein to the whimsical, but their whimsicalities have been embodied in palpable shapes, like Pucks and Quixotes and Gargantuas. The whimsical may fit its garments to an aerial sprite, but it is considered too mercurial to be used as a prop for a philosophic system. But may it not be true that Philosophy, to keep itself in sanity, has at times a need for a little inrush of the whimsical? The argument which gets going by the sheer force of logic, that piles Pelion on Ossa, sometimes gets clogged in its passage by the sheer weight of its superincumbent mass, and it is probable that a good stiff breeze of humor blowing upon the mountain will blow out to sea a good deal of the chaff which has gathered.

The difference between satire and whimsicality is the difference between the frown and the smile. While the frown in argument has had a long line of notable successes, and the whimsical has hardly got started on its literary orbit, we are not so sure but that in the future there may be a merry chase for literary goals between these two contenders. But while we are in doubt about the permanency of the whimsical, we shall still have the pleasure of enjoying this book of Gerald Stanley Lee.

We have mentioned several persons who will not likely be interested in Mr. Lee. As we reflect we note that this list grows, and we soon find ourselves in a questioning state as to whether it is worth while to point out the merits of one who seems to care but little for any of our penchants, and who chooses to go on in his self-willed way. We tabulate a few more men who will not like Mr. Lee, with the same pleasure that we tabulate our enemies whose opinions we are glad that we care little for. The matter-of-fact man who has gotten his system of life and thought carefully mapped out, and who reads simply to confirm his own system, will find no place for Mr. Lee. The critic who noses among sentences for the illogical and the discrepant, will treat him with scant courtesy. The realist—say, like Tolstoi—who sees such a stark raving world that it can be only the part of an honest soul to speak such words of truth and soberness as will salt into rectitude this weltering mass, will hardly keep on speaking terms with Mr. Lee. The transcendentalist—say, of the type of Emerson—and Mr. Lee is perhaps indebted more to Emerson than to any other author—will have a certain liking for him; but the eye-winking over the left shoulder and the sacrilegious persiflage will put too much of a strain upon the aerial shoulders of the thorough-going transcendentalist. And lastly, the philosopher will toss him into the sea without so much as giving him a hammock-shotted shroud. Mr. Lee disports such elusiveness that he can not be made merchandise of by any of these types of mind. If he is to be enjoyed, it must be by another type of mind and by other methods of approach.

We conceive that the best way to enjoy Gerald Stanley Lee is to enjoy him as you would a sunset, or a snowstorm, or a game of football—that is, take him in with your senses on the surface. He keeps things going and singing and intonating, and the best thing to do is to simply get in touch with the spectacle. Do not ask too much of him—you perhaps had better not ask for anything. Do not insist that every thought must be dove-tailed with every other thought. Do not get down the microscope when the call is for the telescope. Do not cast him off because the Presiding Genius of the State of Massachusetts seems once in a while to get him on the hip. There are too many Roman candles and skyrockets and blue-lights going on for a man to shut his eyes on the entire program because he has conjectured that a few fizzes have been set off at his feet. If we can get the right type of a man, with the right kind of a spirit, to fall under the influence of Mr. Lee and his book, then something of importance will be found.

First, we shall find that all of the so-called whimsicality is but a surface ripple or eddy to a profound system of thought. The winds catch the top of his stream and make spray enough for miniature rainbows and music enough to lead one out for a summer day's delight. Mr. Lee's whimsicality is but the smile of a knight errant who feels so sure of his strength that his lips have caught the banter which springs from his confidence. His weakness is greater than the strength of his foes. His little finger thicker than his adversary's loins. And so he smiles and trips down to the jousting place holding what seems but a reed for a weapon, but with which he can smite with the strength of ten, because, like Galahad, his heart and thought are pure.

But when we attempt to find a system in this book we are superficially violating the entire sentiment of the book. The book is a smash at systems. The iconoclast is out with his hammer to bring devastation to our cherished institutions and methods of work. The scientist, with his unfailing rules, is shredded out of all resemblance to gentility. This process of destruction is effected through the sure and sweet poison of smiles. But in all this, Mr. Lee simply exhibits himself as another example of the inconsistency and perhaps the impossibility of practicing one's literary preachments against the bane of systems. He makes fun of the scientist, but with all his bizarre methods, his fierce attitudinizing, his invocation of dreams, his deft hanging on to the shadowy truth of some paradox, he is still in spirit a scientist, and none the less a scientist because he has taken for his subject the science of self. His theme is always the emancipation of life, and if he chooses to treat this subject under the caption "The Lost Art of Reading," we shall not be so homiletically inclined as to say that he gets off his subject. Mr. Lee has but one topic, and no matter what he announces, he straightway falls to a discussion of life and its joy.

But before we take a glance at his thoughts we should note his manner of expression. We believe that Mr. Lee has written some of the most beautiful things of any of our recent writers. He is a disciple of Emerson, but there is a fluidy and eloquence in many of his sentences which Emerson could not attain unto. His style is full of fervor, ryhthmical, well poised, and of that quality such as now and then Carlyle and Ruskin strikes so that the whole body responds to the appeal. In reading the eyes often call upon the lips for reinforcement, and when the lips begin, the legs begin to move, as though it were necessary to get the thought filtered through all the organs of the body. Many a time in reading some of his passages I have begun a pilgrimage through the hall and the study so as to get the utmost joy of the thought. We can do no better than to give the reader some of these beautiful things, for the thoughts of Mr. Lee may be cut out of their context and still display their regal beauty. He writes about books:

"It is the first trait of a great book, it seems to me, that it makes all other books—little hurrying petulant books—wait. A kind of immeasurable elemental hunger comes to a man out of it. Somehow I feel that I have not had it out with a great book if I have not faced other great things with it. I want to face storms with it, hours of weariness, and miles of walking with it. It seems to ask me to. It seems to bring with it something which makes me want to stop my mere reading and doing kind of life, my ink and paper imitation kind of life, and come out and be a companion with the silent shining, with the eternal going on of things. It seems to be written in every writing that is worth a man's while that it can not—that it shall not—be read by itself. It is written that a man shall work to read; that he must win some great delight to do his reading with. Many and many a winter day I have tramped with four lines down to the edge of the night, to overtake my soul—to read four lines with. I have faced a wind for hours—been bitterly cold with it—before the utmost joy of the book I had lost would come back to me. . . . If a chapter has anything in it, I want to do something with it, go out and believe it, live with it, exercise it awhile. I am not only bored with a book when it does not interest me. I am bored with it when it does. I want to interrupt it; take it out doors; see what the hills and clouds think; try it on; test it; see if it is good enough—see if it can come down upon me as rain or sunlight or other real things, and blow upon me as the wind. It does not belong to me until it has found its way through all the weathers within and the weathers without; until it drifts with me through moods, events, sensations, and days and nights, faces and sunsets, and the light of stars—until it is a part of life itself."

"It does not really belong to me to live in a great book—a book with the universe in it. Sometimes it almost seems to. But it barely, faintly belongs to me. It is as if the sky came to me, and stooped down over me, and then went softly away in my sleep."

"Perhaps there is no more important distinction between a great book and a little book than this, that the great book is always a listener before a human life, and the little book takes nothing for granted of a reader.

It does not expect anything of him. The littler it is, the less it expects and the more it explains. Nothing that is really great and living explains. Living is enough. If greatness does not explain by being great, nothing smaller can explain it. God never explains. He merely appeals to every man's first person singular. Religion is not what He has told men. It is what He has made men wonder about until they have been determined to find out. The stars have never been published with footnotes. . . . The moon has never gone out of its way to prove that it is not made of green cheese. . . . In proportion as a thing is beautiful, whether of man or God, it has this heroic helplessness about it with the passing soul or generation of souls. If people are foolish, it can but appeal from one dear, pitiful fool to another until enough of us have died to make it time for a wise man again."

"People who always know what time it is, who always know exactly where they are, and exactly how they look, have it not in their power to read a great book. The book that comes to the reader as a great book is always one that shares with him the infinite and the eternal in himself."

We have stated that the emphasis Mr.

Lee places is on life. Life must be free and full of joy. Anything which may interfere with a man's liberty and joy must be changed. In our present educational methods he finds many hindrances. Our civilization in itself is oppressive. It is overlaid with conventions which crush the soul's aspirations. "Civilization is the dust we scuffle in each other's eyes." We are too busy with things to think much of souls. There must be less of hurry, more of meditation. He says:

"When the peace and strength of spirit with which the walls of temples are builded no longer dwell in them, the stones crumble. Temples are builded of eon-gathered and eon-rested stones. Infinite nights and days are wrought in them, and leisure and splendor wait upon them, and visits of suns and stars, and when leisure and splendor are no more in human beings' lives, and visits of suns and of stars were as though they were not, in our civilization, the walls of it shall crumble upon us. If fullness and leisure and power of living are no more with us, nothing shall save us. Walls of encyclopedias—not even walls of Bibles shall save us, nor miles of Carnegie-library. Empty and hasty and cowardly living does not get itself protected from the laws of nature by tons of paper and ink.

The only way out for civilization is through the practical men in it—men who grapple daily with ideals, who keep office hours with their souls, who keep hold of life with books, who take enough time out of hurrahing civilization along—to live."

One of his startling accusations against our present system of education is this:

"It is not the least pathetic phase of the great industry of being well informed, that thousands of men and women may be seen on every hand giving up their lives that they may appear to live, and giving up knowledge that they may appear to know, taking pains for vacuums."

Later, but supplementary to this passage, are found these eloquent words:

"The larger universe is not one that comes with the telescope. It comes with the larger self; the self that by reaching farther and farther in, reaches farther and farther out. It is as if the sky were a splendor that grew by night out of his own heart, the tent of his love of God spreading its roof over the nature of things. The greater distance knowledge reaches, the more it has to be personal, because it has to be spiritual."

In the chapter, "The Country Boy in Literature," an important principle of reading is given, closing with a definition of faith which is difficult to surpass:

"Probably only the man who has very little would be able to tell what faith is, as a basis of art or religion, but we have learned some things it is not. We know that faith is not a dead-lift of the brain, a supreme effort either for God or for ourselves. It is the soul giving itself up, finding itself, feeling itself drawn to its own, into infinite space, face to face with strength. It is the supreme swinging free of the spirit, the becoming a part of the running-gear of things. Faith is not an act of the imagination—to the man who knows it. It is infinite fact, the infinite crowding of facts, the drawing of the man-self upward and outward, where he is surrounded with the infinite man-self. Perhaps a man can make himself not believe. He can not make himself believe. He can only believe by letting himself go, by trusting the forces of gravity and the law of space around him. Faith is the universe flowing silently, implacably through his soul. He has given himself up to it. In the tiniest, noisest noon his spirit is flooded with the stars. He is led out to the boundaries of Heaven and the night-sky bears him up in the heat of the day."

No one who has gone through the literary grind of a college course and has seen how literature has gone through analytical crushing machines, but will appreciate the keen words of Mr. Lee. Because of the importance of the subject and the exquisite putting of the case, we quote somewhat at length:

"It is to be expected now and then, in the hurry of the outside world, that a newspaper critic will be found writing a cerebellum criticism of a work of the imagination; but the student of literature, in the comparative quiet and leisure of the college atmosphere, who works in the same separated spirit, who estimates a work by dislocating his faculties upon it, is infinitely more blameworthy; and the college teacher who teaches a work of genius by causing it to file before one of his faculties at a time when all of them would not be enough—who does this in the presence of young persons and trains them to do it themselves, is a public menace. The attempt to master a masterpiece, as it were, by reading it first with the sense of sight, and then with the sense of smell, and with all the senses in turn, keeping them carefully guarded from their habit of sensing things together, is not only a self-destructive but a hopeless attempt. A great mind, even if it would attempt to master anything in this way would find it hopeless, and the attempt to learn a great work of art—a great whole—by applying the small parts of a small mind to it, one after the other, is more hopeless still. It can be put down as a general principle that a human being who is so little alive that he finds his main pleasure in life in taking himself apart, can find little of value for others in a masterpiece—a work of art which is so much alive that it can not be taken apart, and which is eternal because its secret is eternally its own. If the time ever comes when it can be taken apart, it will be done only by a man who could have put it together, who is more alive than the masterpiece is alive. Until the masterpiece meets with a master who is more creative than its first master was, the less the motions of analysis are gone through with by those who are not masters, the better. A masterpiece can not be analyzed by the cold and negative process of being taken apart. It can only be analyzed by being melted down. It can only be melted down by a man who has creative heat in him to melt it down and the daily habit of glowing with creative heat."

"The organs that appreciate literature are the organs that made it. True reading is latent writing. The more one feels like writing a book when he reads it, the more alive his reading is and the more alive the book is."

"Unless what a pupil is glows to the finger-tips of his words, he can not write; and unless what he is makes the words of other men glow when he reads, he can not read."

Mr. Lee has the feeling of a realist. No one who has ever gone into a library and been confronted by rows of ponderous tomes, but has had a sensation similar to what Mr. Lee has so wonderfully expressed:

"The question that concerns me is, What shall a man do, how shall he act, when he finds himself in the hush of a great library—opens the door upon it, stands and waits in the midst of it, with his poor outstretched soul all by himself before IT—and feels the books pulling on him? I always feel as if it were a sort of an infinite cross-roads. The last thing I want to know in a library is exactly what I want there. I am tired of knowing what I want. I am always knowing what I want. I can know what I want almost anywhere. If there is a place left on God's earth where a modern man can go and go regularly and not know what he wants awhile, in Heaven's name, why not let him?

I am as fond as the next man, I think, in knowing what I am about, but when I find myself ushered into a great library, I do not know what I am about any sooner than I can help. I shall know soon enough—God forgive me! When it is given to a man to stand in the Assembly Room of Nations, to feel the ages, all the ages, gathering around him, flowing past his life; to listen to the immortal stir of Thought, to the doings of The Dead, why should a man interrupt—interrupt a whole world—to know what he is about? I stand at the junction of all Time and Space. I am the three tenses. I read the newspaper of the universe. It fades away after a little, I know. I go to the card catalogue like a lamb to the slaughter, poke my head into Knowledge—somewhere—and am lost; but the light of it on the spirit does not fade away. It leaves a glow there. It plays on the pages afterwards."

Among the most interesting pages of the book are those in which he discusses the various methods of reading. We must forego large quotations which we have marked which express in the most trenchant way the failings of instructors to properly teach the use of books. One of the most amusing things in the entire book is his description of Meakins, who is always reading for Principles. Reading for Facts is another method which comes in for a good drubbing. Reading for Results and Reading for Feelings are chapters with much of eloquence. He believes much in what he calls "Reading Down Through." In the great chapter, Reading the World Together, we get his view of the chief method of reading. He considers that man is too great to read with any other idea than that of taking in everything. His expression of how truth may be gotten through the dramatic method, is of great interest.

"I have caught myself looking at crowds of faces as though they were rows of worlds. Is not everything I can know or guess or cry or sing, written on faces? An audience is a kind of universe by itself. I could pray to one—when once the soul is hushed before it. If there were any necessity to select one place rather than another, any particular place to address a God in, I think I would choose an audience. . . . . Every man's face is a kind of prayer he carries around with him. One can hardly help joining in it. It is sacrament to look at his face, if only to take sides in it, join with the God-self in it and help against the others. Whoever or Whatever He is, up there across all Heaven, He is a God to me because He can be infinitely small or infinitely great as He likes. I will not have a God that can be shut up into any horizon or shut out of any face. When I have stood before audiences, have really realized faces, felt the still and awful thronging of them through my soul, it has seemed to me as if some great miracle were happening."

Under this same topic of the value of the dramatic method, we have this beautiful illustration of Shakespeare's method of growing great:

"A dramatist can not help growing great. At least, he has the outfit for it if he wants to. One hardly wants to be caught giving a world-recipe—a prescription for being a great man; but it does look sometimes as if the habit of reading for persons, of being a sort of spiritual cannibal, or man-eater, of going about through all the world absorbing personalities the way other men absorb facts, would gradually store up personality in a man, and make him great—almost inconveniently great, at times, and in spite of himself. The probabilities seem to be that it was because Shakespeare instinctively picked out persons in the general scheme of knowledge more than facts; it was because persons seemed to him, on the whole in every age, to be the main facts the age was for, summed the most facts up; it was because they made him see the most facts, helped him to feel and act on facts, made facts experiences to him, that William Shakespeare became so supreme and masterful with facts and men both."

But this matter of quotation must find an end. There is hardly a page which does not arrest attention. We can not find in our knowledge of prose literature more beautiful things than some of the things which he has expressed. His thought is caught in the meshes of the most deft and scintillating English. We may be too much fact-mongers, or too much in love with present systems, to care for his philosophy. We may devise effectual methods to get his attempts at logic frustrated. We may point to his persiflage and put a question-mark as to the merits of his iconoclasm. We do not presume that he is for all men, but still he is a force to be reckoned with in his realm. We should not miss his companionship. His closing words are:

"Well, here we are, Gentle Reader. We are rounding the corner of the last paragraph. Time stretches out before us. On the great highroad we stand together in the dawn—I with my little book in hand, you, perhaps, with yours. The white road reaches away before us, behind us. There are cross-roads. There are parallels, too. Sometimes when there falls a clearness on the air, they are nearer than I thought. I hear crowds trudging on them in the dark, singing faintly. I hear them cheering in the dark. But this is my way, right here. See the hill there? That is my next one. The sun in a minute. You are going my way, comrade? . . . You are not going my way? So be it. God be with you. The top of the morning to you. I pass on."

Hawthorne

THE place of Hawthorne in American literature is indisputably high. Criticism, which is likely at all times to carry an irreverent spirit into the most sacred precincts, has come to the shrine of Hawthorne with cowled head and reverent mien. He has borne the most charmed life of any of our writers. The fusillades which have mowed down the rank and file of our literary men, have left him with scarcely a scar. Emerson has been made to run the gauntlet through all the spaces between charlatanism and the highest genius. Some have stripped Lowell of his so-called scholarship, abraded his poetry until only a few singing leaves have been left, and robbed his essays of their authority. Poe's reputation has been swinging like a pendulum through an arc that includes about equal shares of praise and blame. Bryant, Holmes, Longfellow, Irving, Whittier, and Whitman, from whom we had hoped that America would claim some enduring hold on posterity, have been pushed about like pawns on the chess-board of literary fate. But

Hawthorne has seemed so secure that we have come to the conviction that he is our chief literary asset—the one author whose fame we can throw with confidence into the face of our English brotherhood of writers and assert our right to be represented among the immortals.

Lowell said of him, "The rarest creative imagination of the century, the rarest in some ideal respects since Shakespeare." Mabie says, "He is, all things considered, the most perfect artist in our literature." Brander Matthews says, "There are very few Hoffmans and Fouques, Poes and Stevensons, in a century—and only one Hawthorne." Mary Fisher says, "It is probable that the world will sooner see another Shakespeare than another Hawthorne."

In the face of all this chorus, we conclude that there must be some substantial ground for such high estimates. There are very few lists of the ten best works of fiction of the past century which will omit the "Scarlet Letter;" and then there are those who prefer "The House of the Seven Gables" to "The Scarlet Letter," even as Hawthorne himself did. Many have held that "The Marble Faun" will vie with either of these two as occupying the highest place; and there is a host of admirers of his short stories who do not hesitate to place the best of them among the finest things which our literature can boast of.

When we come, therefore, to inquire into the qualities which have given Hawthorne such a tenure on fame, several things stand at the threshold of our inquiry. Whether these things are the things of permanent value, are for proper consideration. One impressive observation which can not escape the eye of the most cursory reader, is the striking difference between Hawthorne and any other writer with which he may be acquainted. Hawthorne is original, beyond all doubt, and the original man will always give us pause. He has shown himself to be the master of certain fields of literature which have not been traversed by any other man. His language, which is clear and beautiful, is a chosen vessel to carry his fine conceptions. And then his conceptions are so redundant that they fly off like the sparks from an anvil. There is no beating about for ideas; they fly like birds to the window. His fancy is by odds the richest in our literature. Lowell's prose has a turn of phrase which is always taking, but Hawthorne holds us not alone through the melody of his phrase—although there is room here for pleasant dalliance—but as well through the prying and the quaint fancies, which, with their beauty or their whimsies, are scattered over every page. The element of surprise is on every page. It is for this reason that Hawthorne must be read slowly. The eye which has formed the habit of scanning a page at a glance, must dwell longer on these richly fraught pages of Hawthorne, or much of their beauty will be lost.

Another trait which has brought many admirers to Hawthorne is his poise. His style is never shoddy. He avoids the purple patch as well as the inconsequential. He shows the most deliberate taste and judgment in the formation of every sentence. In this respect he differs much from Emerson. Emerson has the oratorical feel for words. They come marshaled as footmen on the run against the enemy. They may scatter before they reach the field of combat, but the loss does not seem to be great, for if the carnage be lacking, the pyrotechnics take its place. Emerson keeps the thunder-beat of short sentences, which indicate the fire of his thought and the possibility of explosiveness. Hawthorne is always collected. He brooks no runaway Pegasus. We never think of comparing his language, as we may Emerson's, to a stream scintillating over stones from its water-shed. There is always with him the calm of the deep current. Emerson may easily become bombastic, while such a contretempt is not conceivable with Hawthorne. Bombast is the orator's bad minute, but, as Chesterton has pointed out, he who fears it over much may fail to reach true eloquence. But Hawthorne never gets enough fire into his utterance to bring him within hailing distance of this fear. His judgment is sound as to where the central channel of literary navigation is to be found, and no one need fear that he will ever run on the rocks or send out signals of distress. He is good for the deep seas. His style is perfectly adapted for description, analysis, and musical effect. It is always unobtrusive—a garment that precisely fits the thought. There are no fluttering ribbons or flamboyant gew-gaws to distract the attention. The language is unenthusiastic, at times cold, but supple as a snake. It fits like water into all the crevices of thought, and it is only an afterthought which causes us to think of it at all. In this respect he is a perfect writer, and justifies the contention of Mabie that "He is the most perfect artist in our literature."

But it is the theme of Hawthorne which, more than anything else, has brought him to the heart of the people. And we speak of THE theme, for, in a very strict sense, Hawthorne has but one theme, and that is Conscience. Through all his stories, tales, and romances we note this obsession. He is one of our notable preachers in literature. The didactic sense is strong in him. We can not garb him as a Christian prophet. He seems but slightly indoctrinated in the tenets of Revelation. Natural religion has, however, laid hold upon him with an iron grasp. Duty is his creed, and conscience the black cowled, incriminating priest, whose voice is as sibilant as a serpent and as authoritative as destiny. Puritanism is the stern historic background on which his characters move. His creed is harsh and unrelieved by the lighter shades of the Christian religion, but it comes as an important auxiliary to the gospel. It deals with Christianity, but it lacks forgiveness, philanthropy, and ethical love. It therefore has no message of burden-bearing, no proclamation of the forgiveness of sins, no cross where a man may be crucified, that he may die and live again. His is a voice of law, a whisper of inexorable destiny following an offense. His message then is simply a prelude to Christianity—a John the Baptist voice crying out in the wilderness—not a voice that cries Repentance, but that says, Beware! Beware!

"Scarlet Letter" is the Nemesis which overtakes the single sin of passion. There is no let up with the avenger. The sleuths of Conscience track Dimmesdale until he stands on the gallows of Hester's shame. They eat his flesh and drink his blood, and, as a meager morsel of recompense, they give him a tongue that speaks like an angel. "The House of Seven Gables" is the story of Conscience working through history. The curse of Matthew Maule glides like a serpent through the years to poison and devastate. It is a story of ancestral blight. Zenobia in "The Blithedale Romance," is the figure which keeps our eyes most strained. She is a woman who plays with liberal ideas, throws convention to the winds, believes in her right to change her living with her change of dress or residence, until the hounds of Conscience get on her track, and the end is horror and suicide. "The Marble Faun" is still the story of Conscience, with a strange and original variation. The theme cursorily seen, is that of regeneration effected through conscience. This has an evangelical aspect and we look again to examine what seems an exception to the usual theology of Hawthorne. But the illusion vanishes when the gaze becomes steady. Donatello did not need regeneration. He was not quite human—only one of those creatures which inhabit the borderland of humanity—a poetic creature, with the speech of a man, the exuberance of a child, and with no touch of the moral life—simply a skipping, sportive faun. Henry James says that Hawthorne has created no types unless it be Donatello. But evidently Donatello is no type of the *genus homo*. He lives only as a fancy, a poetical abstraction, a human mirage. He commits a crime, and then begins a change. Conscience builds up a fabric of bewilderment, the brightness of the day fades out of the horizon, the tumult of seething things works like yeast in his heart; he becomes gloomy and meditative, and finally a man works upward out of the leaven, like Milton's lion, pawing to free itself from its earthly clamps. But the entire process lacks verisimilitude. As a fancy it works, but it is anthropologically weak and psychologically impossible. We can not call this a work of regeneration. We may call it a work of reconstruction through the power of Conscience. But, after all, the pain is on the tale and the shadows gather gloomily about the close. The story of "Septimius Felton," or the elixir of life, is once more the story of Conscience—how a life becomes criminal in the case of a dreamer, and how the hounds of destiny are always on his track, because he cared more for the elixir than he cared for human life.

Because Hawthorne is a moralist he should be of value to the ministerial profession. His short stories are a veritable homiletical treasure house, and we do not know where more rich illustrative material can be found than in these volumes. "Ethan Brand" is another frightful study in conscience. "The Great Stone Face" has been used frequently to illustrate the power of association and expectation. "The Birthmark" tells of the danger of a lack of sympathy for the imperfect. "Young Goodman Brown" is a terrible exposition of the danger of the official religious life. "Rappaccini's Daughter" shows how one may become inured to the atmosphere of sin and seem to grow beautiful. "The Celestial Railroad" is a satire on virtue made easy. "Egotism" shows the torment of jealousy and its only cure in forgiveness. "Roger Malvin's Funeral" is the penalty for delayed duty. "The Artist of the Beautiful" teaches that the sense of the beautiful is more to be desired than the objects of beauty. "The Great Carbuncle" is a gem to be found only by the lover. "The Prophetic Pictures" show the danger of prophecy or expectation. "Fancy's Show Box" is an explication of the guilt of intention. "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" teaches the folly of vain regrets. "Peter Goldthwaite's Treasure" is illustrative of the useless labor for the transitory.

The greatness of Hawthorne as a writer of fiction is not in so much danger of being overstated as of being misunderstood. "Scarlet Letter" is, perhaps, the greatest piece of fiction written by an American, and that it is entitled to a high place among all the works of fiction written in the English language, is an estimate generally accepted. There may be objections urged against the construction of the story and the use of certain characters. Brownell has stated that the entire introduction containing the story of the custom-house, is a blemish. Hawthorne was anxious to relieve the tension of the story, and so resorted to this method. However excellent as a piece of writing this introduction may be, it is only a prolonged foot-note, and mars the symmetry of the story. The objection that the character of

Chillingworth is poorly conceived, is a matter to be fought out. We suppose that a realist like Thackeray or Howells or even Hardy would have refused to give to an outraged husband the prying, inquisitorial, and demoniacal qualities which Hawthorne has given to his character. The rôle of the jealous would be more to their liking. But it must always be remembered that Hawthorne has a Theme to expound as well as a Story to tell. He is more of a preacher than he is a realist. It required a character similar to the one he has portrayed to get his thesis laid put properly. He might have adopted the realist's idea of Chillingworth, but then the book would not have been "Scarlet Letter" as we now have it. We could never have had the inner workings of the mind of Dimmesdale without the silent malignity of Chillingworth.

The customary method of dealing with the works of Hawthorne is to give unstinted praise. No American writer has had less pain and heartache from criticism than has Hawthorne. This is the way in which we have sought to reward our diffident, shrinking genius. His spirit has grown upon us, and in a like manner with Shakespeare we have considered the ark of his genius so sacred that it must not be defiled with the human touch. But criticism needs not only to be generous. Literary criticism should be a criticism of life. It should prove an adjunct to morals; for we conceive that the highest art should go *parri passu* with the highest living. In his personal life, Hawthorne was clean. No word of scandal was spoken against him. In the workings of his mind he did not have to overcome the fumes which arise from vices and bad habits. If we may speak of failure, we shall say that his failure came from the very characteristic which assisted much to bring about his greatest success. His modest regard for his own production made him careful and conscientious in his literary workmanship. He labored at the expression of his thoughts until they came forth perfect. But this same diffident spirit kept him from his highest achievement. It helped him much in his craftsmanship and hindered him much in preserving a large vision. He became over-cautious in his creative works. He did not dare to let himself loose. His note-books reveal him as quite another man. In these he is communicative. His opinions are expressed with the utmost abandon. His attitude is negligee. But when we turn to his fiction, we find him on dress parade. And it is not to be presumed that his dress parade is not better than his careless and common self. He has great decorative facilities; but the point to be urged is that he rarely lets us get at his inner self in his fiction. His opinions on things in general can be found only as we go to his note-books. And what surprising revelations do we find in these note-books of his critical judgments on literary men and artists! He goes to the Louvre, travels to Florence and Rome, sees the works of the painters of the world, and then deliberately records his conviction of some of the contemporaries in these words: "Here are three artists—Mr. Brown, Mr. Wilde, and Mr. Muller, who have smitten me with vast admiration within these few days past, while I am continually turning away disappointed from the landscapes of the most famous of the old masters, unable to find any charm or illusion in them." He went to the galleries of the Louvre and said: "I must confess that the vast and beautiful edifice struck me far more than the pictures, sculpture, and curiosities which it contains." Of Fra Angelico, he said: "I might come to him in time if I thought it worth while, but it is enough to have an outside perception of his kind and degree of merit, and so to let him pass into the garret of oblivion, where as many things as good or better are piled away, that our own age may not stumble over them." He records his judgment of Titian, "Titian must have been a very good-for-nothing old man." Only occasionally do we find him enthusiastic in his praise of the great. The Venus de Milo and the pictures of the Sistine Chapel stirred him to unwonted exclamations. But his general attitude to pictorial and plastic art was that of a bored man, who felt that he must see things since conventional culture demanded it, rather than from any great love for art. The same coldness and lack of enthusiasm are seen when he visits the places of great literary associations. He goes through Scott's country, spends many days in the lake district, made memorable by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, and Southey, but he does not seem to be the least moved. He goes to the birthplace of Shakespeare, but his attitude is cold and critical. In his fiction we find him continually dropping into the musing attitude, but when he faces the things of his experience, such as are recorded in his note-books, we note that this spirit is almost entirely absent. Another thing is notable as an illustration of his lack of enthusiasm.

As our representative to the Court of St. James, under the administration of Pierce, he had open doors to all functions. His opportunities for meeting with the great men of literature were unsurpassed; but how little did he seem to care for these associations! He saw Tennyson once at a distance. We do not know whether he ever met Dickens or Thackeray. He was found several times in functions where he met Robert Browning and his wife. Powers, the sculptor, was the one who filled the largest place in his note-books, and he speaks of him with almost extravagant praise. This lack of enthusiasm for men in the same literary profession with him is one of the surprising things which the biographer finds in the life of Hawthorne. He has been called a recluse, and an excessive shyness has been given as the reason for this aloofness. But we must look deeper than this to find the cause, and the conclusion is that Hawthorne cared but little for literary associations. His love for books, as well as love for men, was strangely limited. His notes as published contain almost as much material as is found in his works of fiction, and yet how few references are found to the great masterpieces. He has no touch of the scholar as was evident in Lowell. Of all our great men who have been pre-eminent in literature, he seems to be the least interested in general literature. He preferred his own company to that of anybody else. This throwing himself back upon himself resulted in his work taking on an excessive introspective aspect. It became morbid, and Hawthorne found himself complaining of his own dark moods. It was for this reason that he wrote the prologue to "The Scarlet Letter." He desired to relieve the dark shadows of the story. But not only was this aloofness the cause of a morbid and pinched outlook on life. Its chief injury was that it prevented him from seeing life, as it were, face to face. Hawthorne is not a realist, and this can not be said to his discredit, for the good romancer should know life as well as the realist. But Hawthorne is not quite vital. We except "Scarlet Letter" and parts of "The Blithedale Romance" as not falling under this indictment. But it is true that his general outlook on life is lacking in a warm-blooded, human interest. He loves the occult more than he loves the human. "Septimius Felton" will not yield one good skewer of blood. "Marble Faun" has a mystery, a strange character, a psychological problem, interlarded with graceful descriptions of Rome, which have made the book a good guide to many of the wonders of the ancient capital of the world; but the human interest of the book is small. "The House of the Seven Gables" carries a pinch-beck look; it is gray and somber. Hepzipah's age can not be measured by the calendar. She is paleontologically old. Clifford is little more than a diseased shadow. Judge Pincheon meets our approval as a good rascal of the waiting sort—not effervescent or tumultuous—such could never proceed from Hawthorne's genius. Phœbe is his creation of light, a butterfly with illumined wings, which lightens up the dark places of the story.

If the portrayal of human character in its breadth and intensity is one of the most important things in enduring fiction, then the fame of Hawthorne must rest upon something else than characterization. Bishop Quayle has pointed out that there are but four leading characters in any of his books. The quaternion seems to be sacred to him. The men and women of Dickens are always trooping in. There seems no limit to his power to create. But with Hawthorne the output is small. And then there are no types among them, no distinguishing traits which set any character off from any other character. A penetrative imagination should always discern the distinctive trait of the individual. But this kind of an imagination was one which Hawthorne did not have highly developed, or else he used it but little. Only in "The Scarlet Letter" do we find the large swing of the spirit. You can loiter through "The House of the Seven Gables" and nap along through "The Marble Faun," but you hurry to the end of "The Scarlet Letter." Life and passion are always interesting, and Hawthorne has thrown himself with an abandon into this book which he has not done with any other book. We are not surprised that he should find himself strangely moved and overcome when he read the closing chapters to his wife. We do not know that any other of his books so affected him. "Scarlet Letter" is a human document, while "The House of the Seven Gables" is a literary *tour de force.*

The possibility of the artistic suppressing the creative instinct in a writer finds strong illustration in Hawthorne. That he was an artist has long ago been recognized; that he was a perfect writer may be acknowledged with the understanding that the term perfection admits of comparative and superlative meanings. "Scarlet Letter" was his first work in sustained fiction, and its greatness is evidential of what might have been expected of Hawthorne. A story with its characters went surging through his mind, and he acted simply as a reporter with a trained hand who transcribed what he saw and heard. The characters were real, their pains were real. The sense of artificiality is practically absent from the entire work. "Scarlet Letter" is a great imaginative production and marks the high period of his spontaneous genius. It was at this precise point that Hawthorne encountered his greatest literary danger, and it proved a danger which wrought calamitously for him. His praise became his temptation. He became noted as our leading writer. His style was justly compared with Lamb's for felicity. His literary sensibility became so acute that he feared to get out of a path in which he felt that he could comfortably and praiseworthily travel. But in taking the praise of his workmanship so seriously, he finally got his eye fixed on the small thing. His astonishing fancy kept his pen busy with materials to fashion cameo-like. As long as fancy was working, and the pen was responding with literary grace and obedience, Hawthorne seemed to be satisfied. He even concluded that "The House of the Seven Gables" and "The

Marble Faun" were superior to "The Scarlet Letter." But we are seeing with other eyes now. The mist is on his other books. All his characters are moving ghost-like to their doom or their glory. There is but little blood in the cheek, little muscle in the arm, and little speculation in the eye. Small things of exquisite workmanship are heaped together promiscuously, original things are laid out before us in great tiers for our inspection; but life, the regnant thing in literature, the material for all high imagining, is limned just as an artist might limn the characters which fought down by the sunset bound of Lyonnesse in the last great battle of Arthur's Wars.

So it came to pass that Hawthorne lost the large fusing power of the imagination which was so welcome in "The Scarlet Letter." It requires enthusiasm to write a work of great imagination, and Hawthorne was constitutionally too cold and reserved to keep his faculties at this high tension. He is, when all things are said, our greatest writer of fiction, but with such majestic powers of observation, with such Ariels of fancy, with such a graceful and complete expression, and with an imagination which, when called to its highest functioning, could compass great things, we have a regret that there is so little of supreme value in his work.

Mention has been made of the over-cautious element in the writings of Hawthorne. This element has been the cause of much of his work losing the sense of reality. Hawthorne is continually destroying his illusion. His prefaces are always graceful, but he becomes too confidential in letting us know his inner feelings and his doubts about the value of his work. When his characters stray away from him, he thinks that he must forthwith apologize, and especially if they are likely to become too intense in their activities. His essay on the Custom-house may be looked upon as one long apology. In his introduction to "The House of the Seven Gables," he says: "The personages of the tale—though they give themselves out to be of ancient stability and considerable prominence—are really of the author's own making, or, at all events, of his own mixing. Their virtues can shed no luster, nor their defects redound in the remotest degree, to the discredit of the venerable town of which they profess to be inhabitants." In "The Blithedale Romance," in order that he might relieve the reputation of the Brook farm of the burdens of the characterizations of his story, he writes: "In the old countries, with which fiction has long been conversant, a certain convention privilege seems to be awarded to the romancer; his work is not put exactly side by side with nature. . . . This atmosphere is what the American romancer needs. In its absence the beings of imagination are compelled to show themselves in the same category as actually living mortals—a necessity that generally renders the paint and pasteboard of their composition but too painfully discernible."

It is this stopping ever and anon to show his personal attitude and to render some apology which make windows through which we see the unreality of the whole performance. A quotation from Shakespeare may not be unappropriate.

Bottom.—"Peter Quince—"

Quince.—"What sayest thou, bully Bottom?"

Bottom.—"There are things in the comedy of Pyramus and Thisbe which will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself, which the ladies can not abide. How answer you that?"

Snout.—"By'r lakin, a parlous fear."

Starveling.—"I believe that he must leave the killin' out when all is done."

Bottom.—"Not a whit; I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say, We will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed, and for the more better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom, the weaver: this will put them out of fear."

One of the necessary things which was lacking in Hawthorne was the sense of absolute conviction. He knew when he was dealing with his characters that he was dealing with the paint and pasteboard of his imagination. It would be impossible for us to conceive that Tolstoi or George Eliot would thus characterize their creations.

Hawthorne wavered too much. He lacked the high element of seriousness. He caught life only through reflection. He needed association and friendly criticism much more than the adulation which everywhere greeted him. He lacked receptivity on the vital side, while he was always receptive on the artistic side of his nature. He needed a mightier belief in men, and then he would have had a greater belief in his characters. Chesterton has said this of the doubting, hesitating man, and we much fear that Hawthorne would fall under his condemnation:

"We are on the road to producing a race of men too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table. We are in danger of seeing philosophers who doubt the law of gravity as being a mere fancy of their own. Scoffers of old time were too proud to be convinced. The meek do inherit the earth; but the modern skeptics are too meek even to claim their inheritance."

The distinction which is drawn between the fancy and the imagination is a distinction which has for some critics furnished a new standard with which to measure Hawthorne. Fancy is the power which originates the oddities, the conceits, the images which may be isolated from one another and which retain no logical relation. The imagination is the large fusing power which gives a coherency and plan to the mass of details. It is the constructive power. This is a valuable academic distinction, and may give some insight into one of the weaknesses of Hawthorne. But it should be noted that it is unwise to formulate such a distinction, and then criticize the statement of Lowell when he declares that

Hawthorne's imagination is one of the finest since Shakespeare's. The term imagination has always had such a variety of meanings that we must permit a man like Lowell to use the term with the meaning he may choose to select. And, furthermore, we must concede that the praise of Lowell must be fully considered. Whatever term one may choose to apply to the fecundity of Hawthorne, fancy or imagination—and we believe that, strictly speaking, the former is the term to apply—still Lowell's estimate is correct that the power is one of the most marvelous within the entire realm of literature. Hawthorne's originality is amazing. His turn of thought, his fine ethical perceptions, and his visualizing tendencies make him one of our most delightful writers of English. His short stories furnish one of the largest storehouses of quaint conceptions to be found anywhere. His detached thoughts are frequently his most inspiring suggestions. What could be finer than this!—

"The interior loftiness of Notre Dame, moreover, gives it a sublimity which would swallow up anything that might look gewgawy in its ornamentation, were we to consider it window by window or pillar by pillar. It is an advantage of these vast edifices, rising over us and spreading about us in such a firmamental way, that we can not spoil them by any pettishness of our own, but that they receive (or absorb) our pettishness into their own immensity. Every little fantasy finds its place and propriety in them, like a flower on the earth's broad bosom."

He was much distressed with the manner of disposing of the dead in Italy, and then whimsically expressed himself:

"Nature has made it very difficult for us to do anything pleasant and satisfactory with a dead body. God knows best, but I wish that He had so ordered it that our mortal bodies, when we have done with them, might vanish out of sight and sense, like bubbles. A person of delicacy hates to think of leaving such a burden as his decaying mortality to the disposal of his friends; but, I say again, how delightful would it be, and how helpful to our faith in a blessed futurity, if the dying could disappear like vanishing bubbles, leaving, perhaps, a sweet fragrance diffused for a minute or two throughout the death-chamber. This would be the odor of sanctity! And if sometimes the evaporation of a sinful soul would leave an odor not so delightful, a breeze through the open windows would soon waft it quite away."

And while we select this passage as an illustration of the quaint and ingenious fancy of the author, there is a hint here of the attitude of Hawthorne to the great things of life and destiny; and an inference may be incidentally obtained of some personal lack which we believe has kept him from attaining to his highest estate as an author.

Hawthorne lacked faith. The mystery of life and death brought to him bewilderment, and there is no indication that he ever seriously sought to solve some of the great soul problems. The Puritan character gave him the historic ground for his best work in literature, but he never really entered into the life of this tremendous man, wandered under the firmament of his spirit, and felt the breath of its ardency. He recognized at a distance the form of the Puritan, caught the lineaments of his stern face, peeped round the corner into his conscience, and surmised somewhat of its machinery, but he never entered into the Puritan's life and sat down in friendly and wholesome communion. Hawthorne and the Puritan were antipodal in their beliefs, manner of life, and activities. At the best, he could be nothing more than a chronicler of external things, or a psychologist of mental states. Brownell says that he had the note of spiritual distinction, the very thing which we fail to find. The truth is that Hawthorne never understood the Puritan in any adequate way, and, not knowing his subject, his work must lack a realistic aspect. Is not this the reason why he became symbolical and openly expressed his preference for illusion rather than for life? In the days of his mental acquisitiveness—and these were the days of his young manhood—his absorption of Puritan history laid the foundation for his future work. The irony of fate was on him, for this was precisely the material which needed a lofty conscience and tremendous conviction to make live. Hawthorne could divine some of the minor workings of conscience, but he failed to trace the larger spiritual currents. It was the material for another man—perhaps awaiting another man—or, even better, it was the material for Hawthorne, had he seen things with other eyes. Had he gone to the Puritan's home, ran his eye up to the altitude of his spirit, absorbed the truths from his old worn Bible, dreamed, perchance, of Cromwell's day, heard the grind of feet on Naseby's field or Marston's Moor, and the clash of arms that seemed to ring and stab with prayer—had Hawthorne gone to his creative task with the faith of the Puritans, throwing light into the dark places, taking the feet to the hill of the lofty vision, and challenging the soul to put on the warrior's armor for truth and conscience' sake—then Hawthorne would have been our amplest soul. He lacked faith, and then his fervor ebbed. His words were clear, but never passionate. If their calm were the calm of the gods, we might rest content, for passion may be subdued on Olympus; but the calm of Hawthorne's style is the calm of a slow pulse and a disillusioned mind. It is always clear, sane, and adequate—the precise expression of the thought—but both lack blood and hurrying feet.

Hawthorne has given hostages to the coming days because he lacked preparation. Only once in his career was he launched in the current of mighty things, but the pace became too terrific for his calm spirit, and he pulled into the eddies where he could twine wreaths of sea-grass, muse on the swift ships, and send adrift his fancies, like the toys put out to sea when men were boys.

George Eliot

LIFE and literature is one of the classical subjects which, by its constant use in literary essays, has threatened to become threadbare. The usual assumption underlying this subject is that the term life is used as a sort of a measuring-rod with which to take the dimensions of any literary product, and there is also the suggestion involved that the personal life of the writer is the life that gets transferred to the printed page. This latter inference is, of course, a false one, and the name of George Eliot may be selected to prove its falsity and to furnish a striking illustration of the theme, "Life Versus Literature." This theme has the aspect of a paradox, and, like all paradoxes, is easily answered and set at naught; but still, like all paradoxes, it persists in a meaning that becomes obvious after a little reflection. For instance, Robert Louis Stevenson is as mild-mannered a gentleman as one should choose to meet. He is somewhat given over to the religious life, and his faith has found expression in several moving prayers. But

Stevenson in his fiction is piratical and bloodthirsty. He seems to luxuriate in the tropics of crime, and manages to keep his moral code on a sliding scale to suit the activities of his creations. S. R. Crockett has priestly blood in him, and it would be a good inference that he carries in his personal life the usual priestly sympathies. But in literature, he swings his red axe with great gusto and surrenders his heavens for the purpose of placing impending horrors over our heads. Here there seems some discrepancy between the personal life and literature. The moral standard has for the nonce been upset and the old world barbarism has been exploited. Are we dealing with questions of depravity when we cite such instances? Does the priest life choose literature to work out its whims and to empty its clogged sewers? Is literature our beast of burden, or is it the scape-goat which vicariously carries our sins into the desert? These are questions for the psychologist and the theologian to decide, and if they are charitably inclined, the author is given a clean bill of health, on the ground that no overt act has been committed. But George Eliot slips into literature on the other side of the ethical plane. She seems something like a Hebrew prophetess, with a commanding sense of duty on her lips; but when we go to the documents which set forth her personal life and thoughts, they do not seem to match with her literary output. The psychologist who boasts his ability to reconstruct the life of a writer from the writer's creative work, would need some friendly genius to whisper in his ear some secrets before he could succeed in his task with George Eliot. If she had dropped from the skies, or surreptitiously slipped on our planet from Mars at some convenient perihelion, and had come with her full power of expression and left us a body of literature similar in moral output to that which is now assigned to her, our constructive psychologists and moralists would have had a comparatively easy task in rebuilding her past life and in showing off her impressive character. But unfortunately for our philosophic theories, George Eliot lived in the sunlight of England's nineteenth century and her life has been clearly photographed. Without a personal belief in God, she has given some vivid pictures of the religious life. Living as an unmarried woman with Lewes, still she has never sneered at the married relation. The best characters she has drawn are those who embraced the Christian religion, the religion which she personally discarded. In her writings there is no letting down of high standards of life. She never apologizes for the use of the term duty; it is her most uncompromising term. A Nemesis is on the track of every wrong-doer, and the slightest infringement of duty leads to irreparable consequences. She has not the Zola instinct which seeks to trace out all the sexual brutalities with such a lightness of touch as to indicate no interest in the affairs of conduct. George Eliot carries a frown on her face when she notes the slightest deviation from the path of duty, and, like some swift moral avenger, she chases the culprit and does not permit him to gain even the house of refuge.

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It is commented on in literary quarters that the vogue for Eliot has passed. Dickens keeps his place; Thackeray is pushing higher and higher his shoulder; Trollope is getting an inner circle; and even Reade is making a sprint from the rear; but Eliot, who, in her day took no second place among the great novelists, who received the most amazing tributes from competent critics, is now becoming a neglected writer. It is interesting at this date to read some of the tributes which have been made to her genius.

William Cleaver Wilkinson said: "The knowledge of the human heart which George Eliot displays, is not an acquired knowledge. It was born with her and in her. It is genius. It is a gift which is Shakespearian in quality—one might as well be frankly true to himself and out with his thought—it is *finer* than Shakespeare. In quantity it is less, but in quality it is more."

Swinburne said: "Such wealth and depth of thoughtful and fruitful humor, of vital and various intelligence, no woman has ever shown—no woman, perhaps, has ever shown a tithe of it."

W. E. Simonds said: "George Eliot's people were never made; they were born like mortals. Personality existed in them, and their author gave them an essence as no writer excepting Shakespeare had ever done."

W. J. Dawson said: "How great was the place George Eliot filled in modern literature we may measure by the impossibility of naming her successor. . . . . Her fiction is wrought with a majesty and power which give it a category of its own and secure for it a noble place in English literature."

John Addington Symonds said: "If he were not so fantastic, if he were less gross and cruel, if he could believe in anything, if life were not a hideous strife of interests in which the stronger tramples on the weak, if he did not love evil for its own sake, Balzac would certainly be one of the two greatest novelists of the world, Miss Evans the other. As it is, he must always be admired with reservations, and regarded as a ruthless pathologist. The higher place of a true physiologist (such as I think Miss Evans is) can not be claimed for him."

William Hurrel Mallock said: "She may be less than Miss Austin in art, but she is greater than Scott in insight. Indeed, to compare her even to Scott is an unfairness to her. We must go for our parallel yet a stage higher; and we must not stop short of the world's greatest poets."

Henry Morley said: "George Eliot's novels will cloud no true faith. They are the work of a woman of rare genius, whose place is, for all time, among the greatest novelists our country has produced."

Anthony Trollope said: "At the present moment George Eliot is the first of English novelists, and I am disposed to place her second of those of my time."

Edward A. Freeman said: "It was a wonderful feat to draw Romola; it was a wonderful feat to draw Mrs. Poyser; but for the same hand to draw Romola and Mrs. Poyser was something more than wonderful; if the fact were not certain, we would deem it impossible."

George Eliot can never be a negligible factor in English fiction. She has elements of strength which have not been surpassed by any other of our English writers, and in some things she is still unequaled. In her day she was looked upon as the most intellectual of all novelists; and there has been no one since, unless it be George Meredith, to dispute this contention. Meredith was writing great works when Eliot was in her most productive period, but his reputation did not overtake him until George Eliot laid down her pen. George Eliot's training was with the most cultured men of her day. She was a companion of Herbert Spencer, Harriet Martineau, George H. Lewis, W. R. Gregg, and Thomas Carlyle. She became acquainted with Emerson, and admired his works greatly. The Brays and Hennels were her intellectual companions. In such a company it was but natural that her mind would take to philosophical studies. It was not long before she began to translate "The Life of Jesus," by Strauss, Feurbach's "Essence of Christianity," and Spinoza's "Tractatus-Theologico-Politicus," the last of which was never published. Her marriage with Lewes threw about her a philosophical aura, and in this atmosphere she seemed to live and move and have her being. But in her heart George Eliot was a seer. The great mass of knowledge did not crush out her emotional life, and when she became acquainted with the works of Shakespeare, Goethe, Lessing, Thackeray, Heine, Schiller, Tennyson, and Scott, she knew that her strength lay in other fields than those of philosophy. It must ever remain a matter of credit to the sagacity of Lewes that he discerned the trend of George Eliot's genius and insisted that she write fiction.

This then was a part of the intellectual training of George Eliot for the work of a novelist. It is never quite wise to seriously speculate on what a life might have been had a certain part been excised. Some have compared George Eliot with Charlotte Brontë, and the suggestion has been made that had the philosophical studies of George Eliot been omitted, that she and Charlotte Brontë might have vied with each other as portrayers of the homely life of the English peasant. Whether the weight of learning did not at times oppress the language of George Eliot and hinder the quick divination of the woman's heart, is a question hardly to be answered. It may be that Swinburne is right when he gives the supremacy to Charlotte Brontë for purity of passion, while he as unquestionably places George Eliot above all other women in the strength of her intellect. It is probable that the criticism of E. P. Whipple, one of our most notable and judicious American critics, will continue to meet the approval of the greater number of those who are capable of arriving at literary merit. He said:

"Add Thackeray's bright and sharp perception to Trollope's nicety in detail, and supplement both with wide scholarship and wide reach of philosophic insight; conceive a person who looks not only *at* life and *into* life, but *through* it, who sympathizes with the gossip of peasants and the principles of advanced thinkers, who is as capable of reproducing Fergus O'Connor as John Stuart Mill, and is as blandly tolerant of Garrison as of Hegel—and you have the wonderful woman who called herself George Eliot, probably the largest mind among the romancers of the century."

In the realm of characterization, it may be safely held that George Eliot has no peer among English novelists. The characters of

Dickens frequently carry tags. You can never mistake them, because they carry such big tags. Some idiosyncrasy is laid hold of, some phrase is coddled and breathed until it becomes saltatory, and then a skeleton is shoved under the verbality and plays the part of head and feet and midriff. The thing which is done is delightful, and we are not to find fault, but simply to discriminate. Thackeray, on the other hand, gets a little nearer the core of things. He lacks the large play of imagination of Dickens. His invention lags. He can not be as popular as his great compeer, although many may take him for a surer risk to outwear the years. But even Thackeray is not uncommonly verbalist, playing with fancies, which are rigged up imitative of men, but lacking verisimilitude. Satire, which is always penetrative of faults, can never report quite correctly the life; it lacks the arterial and venous flow. Sympathy must ever be the divining-rod of character. Whenever Thackeray was cynical, he did not report life correctly; when he forgot himself, he showed that he was one of the most profound realists. Dickens was of such a sympathetic turn that he could dress up an automaton and fall as much in love with it as a child with a wax doll. In reality, he was a child grown big. What makes us love him even more than Thackeray is that he ever keeps the wonder of the child world before us. These are not quite men and women—some of them are wonderfully so—but they are dream children, woven of sunshine, tears, and laughter; and if we are not too definitely scientists, but keep our first estate and remain poets, then Dickens is an ever-invited comrade. George Meredith, since he passed away, has received great laudation. He was undergoing the process of extreme unction before he died. In the cloud of praise that enveloped him, the question was insistent whether he was not the literary Atlas who would support for future generations our fiction fame. But however great a spirit Meredith was, he never quite forgot himself in his books. He led his characters out for public inspection, but, like the professional breaker of colts, he never permitted them to get beyond his tether. His characters did most marvelous things, made most marvelous speeches, but while the hands were Esau's, the speech was always Jacob's. His men and women always lacked the schooling of the inconsequential life. They never had the free will to wander off and forget themselves in the sun-checkered woods and to sit down and, in an aimless way, angle for the elusive trout without the fear that the five-leagued boots of Meredith would appear on the horizon and the next moment they, as Lilliputians, would be squeezed between the thumb and forefinger of the giant and set down at some convenient trolling place, where they could have instant inspection.

But George Eliot was the most impersonal of all our writers of English fiction. She was never intrusive when her characters occupied the stage. When they made their exit, she sometimes occupied the interim with little sermonettes in the form of Thackeray. But her sermonette is a thing apart. Her characters were always free from her moralizing, in a sense much greater than was Thackeray's. She was rather deistic in her creationing; she let things spin out from her creative hand and then quietly swing out in their orbits without the interference of special providence. And these characters are as real as Tolstoi's, Turgenieff's, or Shakespeare's. They move by their inner laws. Her knowledge of human nature borders on the miraculous. The characters of Mirah and Mordecai in Daniel Deronda occurs to us to be the most nebulous of all her creations, and the entire book has less vital ongoing interest than any other book she has written, unless we shall except Romola—her dismal *tour de force* of historical essay—and yet one of the greatest of historical novels. But these two novels contain the characterizations of Grandcourt and Tito, her two greatest efforts in getting depravity before us. As men, they are two of the most colossal failures in literature, illustrating well the degeneracy which comes through a weak will. In Middlemarch, we have perhaps the most profound analysis of motives anywhere to be found. The book lacks movement, and is not so interesting as "Adam Bede," "Mill on the Floss," or "Silas Marner," but as a guide book to the varying motives and emotions, we do not know where to find its equal. It is in this book that the only sensible young woman that George Eliot has portrayed is to be found, unless we shall except Dinah Morris in "Adam Bede." Mary Garth is such a model of sanity, thoughtfulness, and womanliness, that we rejoice that such a profound realist as George Eliot believed her to be possible.

An interesting question may here be put to George Eliot. As a realist, did she ever find ideal characters? In her books we shall look quite in vain to find any person like Jean Val Jean of Hugo's masterpiece. A most notable thing, however, is her appreciation of the ministry. Her most delightful characters are the representatives of the religion which she personally rejected. Dinah Morris is a genuine emotional Methodist, full of sacrifice and undoubting in her beliefs, who, with a white ribbon under her chin, would to-day be called a deaconess. Amos Barton is good, but narrow. Mr. Lyon, in "Felix Holt," is the salt of the earth. Savonarola is an accurate description of one of the world's greatest preachers and reformers. Farebrother, in "Middlemarch," is almost the most interesting of the entire number—a gambler preacher, but innately good and altruistic. George Eliot was not pessimistic or cynical in her writings. She believed in virtue, and many of her characters stand out boldly to challenge our admiration. Bob Jakin, Mr. Jerome, Mr. Garth, Seth Bede, and Adam Bede are among the company of the elect. We wish that Mary Garth had thought less of Fred Vincy and more of Farebrother, but the writer's touch was unerring in keeping the heroine in touch with her old lover. Romola has perhaps more personal dignity and womanly pride than any other of the prominent characters, but she never warms up to the reader, and we are not surprised that Tito, with his easy-going life, should abandon her for the fruit girl, Tessa. It is easy to see that George Eliot has reversed the ordinary conception that woman is of finer texture than man, for she has given us a preponderance of male virtue. The inconsequential Mrs. Holt and Mrs. Tulliver, the weak Hetty, the despicable Mrs. Lydgate, the bullet-heads of the Deanes and the Pulletts, the narrow-souled Gwendolyn—these are indications of the weakness of her sex, as she saw it in her day.

The observational power of George Eliot is of a high type. Her pictures of the England of her day will furnish accurate materials for the historian of the future to rebuild the peasant life of the middle part of the nineteenth century. "The Mill on the Floss" perhaps shows this quality at its highest development. George Eliot did not see everything as Dickens did; for Charles Dickens had the most comprehensive observational power of any novelist of the British Isles. She did not show that almost superhuman skill of Hardy's, or even Philpott's, of getting animate and inanimate nature rooted in each other until men become absolutely indigenous to certain sections of the soil. Her gift was not so fine as Hardy's, nor so comprehensive as Dickens', but it was accurate and worthy the careful study of any one who desires to see the real things which met the eye of George Eliot.

It is as a humorist that we see George Eliot at her best. In her conversation, it is said she gave no indication of the vast fund within her. Her philosophical studies would naturally tend to dry up the sources of humor. It might be a matter worthy of careful inquiry whether any great philosophical mind has ever had the capacity for rollicking humor. An idealistic or materialistic philosophy which tries to build the world systems seems to be incompatible with the spirit of downright fun. The stuff of which humor is made is so intractable that it resists the action of any force to get it into some harmonious orbit. And if this observation seems to be fairly accurate, the paradox arises, How did George Eliot bend from her high functioning of keeping her intellectual world philosophically poised and become a subtle and profound humorist? She has been classed with Spencer and Comte and Lewis as a philosopher; how could she get off the stilts of such companionship and laugh with such whole-hearted devotion? But it must be noted that though the training of George Eliot was philosophical, she never became a philosopher in the academic sense. To any one who to-day reads the book of Hennel, which was chiefly responsible for her departure from Christianity, the question arises, How could she have been so easily led away from her former faith? George Eliot was always impressionable and teachable, but she lacked that ability—rather let us say that she resisted the impulse—to get her life and thought subjected to some unitary law. If the philosopher does not laugh, then George Eliot was no philosopher, for her books are full of the most subtle humor. It is a humor that is not burlesque, as in Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, or even Thackeray; neither is it an extravaganza, as in Dickens; but it is a humor that is as unerring to human nature as anything in all her writings. Mrs. Poyser occupies the stage in "Adam Bede" for the delectation of the world. The book would have been hardly endurable from a literary standpoint, with the tragedy of Hetty in its working and rushing on to a melodramatic close—a weakness here of Eliot's construction—had it not been for the infectious gabble of Mrs. Poyser about crocks and linens and lands and good housework. She rests us long enough to get the lines of pain out of our face and a little good cheer laid up before we are led on to the tragic denouement. Mrs. Tulliver and Mrs. Holt are so tragically little that we look upon them as though from an eminence, and laugh to see how like ants they crawl around, busy with their infinitesimal burdens. George Eliot came the nearest to getting into satire when she drew the Deanes and the Pulletts and the Gleggs in the "Mill on the Floss." The interplay of these related families comes nearest to rousing indignation of anything we know of in all her writings. But her climax of humor is in Middlemarch, where Featherstone is waiting for death, and his kith and kin are gathered together to watch his transit and, incidentally, to lay hands upon such impedimenta as Featherstone thought it not wise to take with him. Solomon and Mrs. Waule and Jonas Featherstone and young Cranch and the little ones form a company whose conversation about their rights is not to be forgotten.

In the construction of George Eliot's novels there is a varying degree of merit. Her earliest book, "Scenes of Clerical Life," is perhaps superior to any of her latest works. There is less adventitious matter and more unity of treatment than in any other of her works, excepting "Silas Marner." Middlemarch comes nearest to a divided interest. The author first intended to call the work "Miss Brooks," but was wisely persuaded to change the title. Dorothea is not the character of the most interest in the book; Rosamond is of equal interest; and the first three-fourths of the book leaves the impression of two stories, running side by side, with no connective tissue between them. The last part of the book brings the threads together, but the impression is still uneffaced that the book lacks unity. "Silas Marner" is her artistic masterpiece. Everything is fitted in with the utmost skill. We believe also that this is her best work. The story does not lag, the theme is interesting, the characters are vital. And what a play of emotion! The sweetest and most touching story she ever told. Silas Marner, a miser, living the narrowest round of duties imaginable, whose only joy lay in counting the guineas, saved from hard work, cheap rent, and poor food. Then comes the tragedy which culminates in the crowning of character. The gold is stolen. Marner, crazed, bewildered, desperate, wanders, he knows not whither. Then the gold comes back in the form of a babe, a foundling. Marner, nearsighted, puts his hand on what he thinks is his lost treasure, and touches golden curls. Then his wretched life takes a schooling with a little child to teach him; and the mission of the child is to break down care, unloose sordid affections, run love into the skein of life, dignify labor, glorify home, until Marner is led out from the bleak, desolated experience of a lost life into the larger horizon where life wears its crown of rejoicing. We are willing to give up Romola, Deronda, and Felix Holt, if the fates should make us choose between Marner and these three combined.

But if there is sometimes looseness of construction with George Eliot, she stands incomparably ahead of both her great compeers in this respect. Dickens and Thackeray were pushed too much by the insistent demand for copy, to ever get their stories well constructed. An exception may be made in the case of Henry Esmond, which is the best constructed of all Thackeray's works. But the philosophic and poetic trend of Eliot's mind would not permit her to do careless and indifferent work. Her invention might lag at times, but her conscience always made her struggle for the best expression.

We touched upon the fact that humor can hardly exist where philosophy has become an obsession. It is apparent from another reason why the strict-going philosopher can not become a successful novelist. The philosopher must deal with general laws. Law becomes his search. The lawless individual is beyond his inclination of study, if not beyond his belief. He is not adapted to deal with what Mr. Brownell calls the special case. He can only comprise things under large general laws. This makes for his undoing in fiction. It produces purpose fiction with the emphasis laid upon laws, institutions, governments, rather than upon men. Such fiction lacks blood. It deals with human nature as X, Y, and Z. Men are simply automata shifted about to show the merits of the proposition. The emphasis is mislaid. No purpose fiction is valuable that does not work through indirection—that does not seek to instruct through the sympathy felt for the characters. But George Eliot has a love for the individual exceeding that of Thackeray's or Dickens'. She follows her characters out to the far extent of even their natural whimsicalities. They are never bolstered up with social, political, or culture props to pose as teachers of the race. They are weak or strong, or indifferent, as human nature prompts. Mr. H. G. Wells has this penchant for instruction; but with his immense ingenuity in constructing future races, he is not keeping in vital touch with his own race. He is paying the price, which must always be paid, for ever keeping the horizon scanned for the superman; and the natural inference is that the superman is something less than the natural man, because he makes us lose interest in all phases of the real man. Such books as Bellamy's or Sheldon's of a decade ago are interesting now as past phases of thought, which were exploited, discussed, passed upon, and then dismissed to their requiescat. No man, woman, or child now looks out from their pages to invite us back for companionship. A few manikins are still making gestures, a little galvanic movement is noticeable, but we are either too busy or too drowsy to keep our eyes on the twitching spectacle long. But Eliot's pages are still vibrant with passing of real feet, and the laughs and tears of her people are so human that we find pleasure in running back a few stadia to keep in touch with rural England in the days when George Eliot scanned her common folk.

There is one criticism which has been made against George Eliot which contains a wrong emphasis. She has been condemned as lacking in movement. The observation is a correct one, while the condemnation is not deserved. It is a correct statement that realism almost always lacks movement as compared with romanticism. To criticise Eliot for lack of movement is to criticise the analytical method of fiction. You can not have much analysis and much movement at the same time. If you choose one, you will be compelled to forego in part the pleasure of the other. Mr. De Morgan is writing novels to-day which look good for at least several decades; but there are no express trains to take you through his enchanted lands. You will have to wander along like lost babes in the woods, gathering flowers, laughing at the drolleries of nature's processes, zigzagging in a seemingly aimless way before you get out in the sunlit and beaten road. You may not like the process because of its slowness, but it is simply a personal taste whether a man shall run or walk for his exercise.

There is another criticism, however, which carries weight: She is lacking in spontaneity. Robert Browning gives many examples of slow movement, or no movement. His dramatic monologues are worked out without a twitch of body or wink of eyelid. His men and women have no feet to run nor hands to move. Yet there is a tragedy worked out in the quiet places, and sometimes a lightning bolt rends the sky and unveils a world of meaning at a flash.

> "There are flashes struck from midnights,
> There are fire flames noondays kindle."

It is in these sudden gleams that we catch Browning at his best. But Eliot never flashes. She seems to have almost superhuman wisdom; she is always instructive; but she never loses her restraint. Take her poetry, for instance. We believe that she has written as beautiful descriptive passages of nature as were written in her day, excepting the work done by Tennyson. And we believe that no other one of the Victorian period was able to draw as fine an etching of true character as she has done in the "Spanish Gypsy," notably in the cases of Silva, Juan, and Zarca. These characters are as truly drawn as the characters of her novels, which means that they have not been surpassed. And then, besides, George Eliot is a master of the richest poetical diction. "The Spanish Gypsy" should be read by every admirer of "Adam Bede," "Silas Marner," and "The Mill on the Floss." Too long this work has rested under the condemnation which resulted from the authoritative word that George Eliot was no poet. But what is lacking in her poetry is lacking in all her works. She has never said the quick-shooting word. The silence deeper than speech has never fallen. The dramatic incident, thrilling with a thousand electric currents, has never arrived. We are always moving on the stream of mighty thoughts, a powerful oarsman is bending to the oars, but there are never any rapids to shoot—no breath to be lost amid swirling dangers. In other words, George Eliot is not dramatic. She has the dramatic instinct, but never the dramatic touch. Like the geometrical figure of the asymtote, she is always approaching, but never arrives. Lines are drawn, actions converge, events march on as though to some predestined goal, but we are never brought up with a gasp to face the utterly unexpected. And yet the unexpected is as real as the expected. They are, in truth, the outstanding things of life. She has fallen into melodrama, as in the unexpected deliverance of Hetty from the scaffold and the tragic death of Tito and Balsadarre. These are but painful instances of an easy method to get rid of some of her literary burdens. The death of Tom and Maggie Tulliver is the nearest approach to the dramatic of any incident that the author has achieved; and this is brought about in such a grewsome manner that half the critics believe that the last third of the "Mill on the Floss" spoils the book. The chapter of Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" which closes with the simple statement that George Osborne fell, with a bullet through his heart, is intensely startling. Other things are forgotten, but this incident stands out as the explosion of the book. All taut lines are suddenly loosened; all plans have suddenly collapsed. The death of Grandcourt is insipid, as compared with this incident in "Vanity Fair." A little speculation could easily devise this method of untangling the knots and of permitting everything to slip out according to poetic justice. Charles Reade has a dramatic gift far surpassing that of George Eliot. Without her profound knowledge of human nature, still he knew better than she when life got to its crises; and there is hardly one of his books but shows a startling skill in setting forth the reasonable but unexpected event.

It would not be wise to affirm that George Eliot was a Christian writer; for a glance at her biography would at once discredit the statement. But it would not be unwise to assert that she has given a message which will be accepted by the Christian world. She has preached the doctrine of sin and its attendant results with great power. Duty has ever been the pitch of her voice. Virtue has ever kept its reward. Her voice has not wavered from the truth that what a man sows that shall he also reap. She has never put on a sneer when she introduced her best characters. She has smiled upon the good, and sympathized with the weak. Even Bulstrode, hypocrite as he is, is covered in the end with a mantle of charity. Eden Phillpots is as religiously disillusioned as was ever George Eliot; but his characters show the conviction of the author. Olive Schreiner wrote a tempestuous book called "The Story of an African Farm," but the story is simply a thesis of the author's unbelief. Harold Frederick wrote a real book in "The Damnation of Theron Ware," and we instinctively impute unbelief to the author. But George Eliot has written so sympathetically and graciously of the Christian life that we wonder whence she received her inspiration. Herbert Spencer, Strauss, Comte, Hennel, Feurbach, Lewes—these were her studies and companions. Religion with them was but a plaything of the race—the sentimental out-cropping of race infancy—built up of fears, ancestral and sun-worship. George Eliot measured strength with them all and remained more than their peer in a knowledge of the things essential to life. But she was greater than all her theories. She moved out in the immensities of the common life. She became acquainted with the common folks and loved them. In their faith and their weakness they were greater than she. That sympathy which carries the vicarious element laid hold upon her. Her life which had taken on doubtful relations may have made her more sympathetic toward the weak. She forgot herself and remembered only that Amos Barton and Adam Bede and Tom Tulliver and Dorothy Brooks and many other people were alive; and then she told their story with impartial fairness. And this constitutes the impersonality of George Eliot. She saw one mighty thing, but she let it slip too soon from her memory. She saw once or twice, with a fleeting glance that character might change, that some sudden leap of soul might take a man's feet out of the slippery places and give them a running path on the rocks that slope to the summit of life. Once or twice in "Scenes of Clerical Life," once in "Adam Bede," through the preaching of

Dinah Morris on the green, a moral, if not spiritual regeneration in "Silas Marner," a few gleams of hope to show that there was grace for slipping feet. But George Eliot too soon forgot. The call of duty came to her with imperious force. It brought finality to her convictions. If feet slipped on the perilous path of duty, then *decensus in Averno est facile.* George Eliot lost her hope, and the Juggernaut of duty rolled on, crushing all who fell beneath it. She preached fate and the absolute call of duty, but too soon became deaf to that voice which was made to reach the wilderness of the world, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters and he that hath no money, come;" and she too soon forgot that men might rise from the ashes of sin and failure and put on crowns of rejoicing.

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